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# DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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Number 74 begins with a reply to *Internationalism's* article, "DeLeonism and the Democratic Myth," in DB73. Supporting *Internationalism* is the fact that "democracy" is just capitalism's current method of maintaining social order. Our rulers can and do adjust it to meet their needs. In general the trend has been to less democracy in terms of elections, ballot access for minor parties, and access to the media. And ready to be called from the wings is the alternative, the sort of political repression we associate with fascism. Also included is the article in the *New Unionist* that prompted *Internationalism's* original attack on DeLeonist ideas about democracy.

Next Mike Ballard reviews an example of the proletarian literature of the nineties. It's a far cry from  
(To p. 7)

## ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the "left," not between Anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism's statist leftwing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, communist anarchists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, and left communists. The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism's wage, market, and money system as well as capitalist politics and unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its market and statist phases.

In the DB the often antagonistic groups that make up this sector can debate and discuss the issues that divide them, gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities and begin a process, we hope, of at least limited cooperation.

The pages of the DB are open to anyone in this political sector, the only limitation being that submissions be typewritten, single-spaced, and copier ready. We do no editing here. As to content, we assume that submissions will be relevant to the purpose of the DB and will avoid personal attacks.

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# DELEONISM AND CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY

[For the complete background of this article readers can consult "South Africa: Successful Struggle for Political Democracy Sets Stage for the Next Successful Struggle for Economic Democracy" in the June 1994 *New Unionist* (621 W. Lake St. #210, Minneapolis, MN 55408) and reproduced beginning on page 8 of this issue, a response in the Summer 1994 *Internationalism* (P.O. Box 288, New York, NY 10018), Jeff Miller's letter in DB67, and *Internationalism*'s answer by JG in DB73.]

A problem with all polemics, including mine I'm sure, is the tendency to choose language that gives a factual statement the kind of *spin* (a recently created U.S. political term) we wish it to take. We can find an outstanding example in *Internationalism*'s choice of the word *supporting* in the first sentence of the article where Miller and the *New Unionist* are described as "supporting" the election of Mandela whereas they did nothing of the sort. Rather the article simply observes that the majority of the South African working class, Blacks, can now struggle openly using South African capitalism's version of democracy to advance their emancipation. Specifically asserted by the article is the idea that no advantage for the working class will flow from elevating a new black leadership, including Mandela.

But the thrust of JG's article concerns what he regards as the deviation from the "Marxist tradition" that results from the New Unionist's DeLeonism, a matter we will get into later in this article. Actually, though, JG betrays his and *Internationalism*'s failure to understand capitalist democracy. To JG the evolution of capitalism's political state falls into clearly delineated historical periods, one of which ended in 1914. During that period, according to JG, capitalism was prosperous enough to grant our class meaningful reforms. Since then, according to *Internationalism*'s doctrine, capitalism's "decadence" has prevented the ruling class from buying off the working class with reforms. Exactly how they can maintain this idea in the face of the historical record of post-WWI social reforms worldwide defies reason. The most outstanding examples in the U.S. include the social legislation of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal during the depths of the 1930s depression as well as the "war on poverty" and other reform legislation of the 1960s. JG and *Internationalism* don't seem to realize that capitalism's political system like its economic system is constantly being fine tuned to maintain social stability while maximizing profits. The "Contract with America" is only the latest phase.

## Bourgeois Democracy and South Africa

The recent history of South Africa shows that repression of the Black working class majority was becoming a losing proposition both in keeping the lid on the class struggle and in its effects on economic development. Capitalism has the same need for social harmony globally as it does nationally. The international economic boycott of capitalist South Africa reflected that need. Also resistance to apartheid posed an internal danger. It was these concerns that prompted the decision by the most powerful of the capitalist factions in South Africa to end apartheid and to coopt Mandela and the African National Congress as partners in running the capitalist state.

The real question here is whether this action by the South African ruling class will advance the cause of social revolution. Miller argues that it will do so by enabling Black workers as well as Whites to organize revolutionary industrial unions and to place on the ballot a revolutionary party calling for the abolition of capitalism and its state. This is the road to revolution advocated by the DeLeonists of all



persuasions as well as the parties of the World Socialist Movement. They see their purpose as that of educating our class to understand the capitalist system and the possible alternatives to it. Their literature points out the capitalist cause of social problems and calls for square for workers to vote against capitalism and for socialism.

#### Internationalism and Genetic Leninism

The next question is why *Internationalism* opposes measures that enable the revolutionary movement in South Africa to become legal. I can see at least two possibilities. One may be Internationalism's Leninist ancestry. Prior to WWI the absence of capitalist political democracy in such absolutist nations as Czarist Russia and other even more backward countries of Eastern Europe and Asia fostered an illegal, underground socialist movement. A legal mass party which workers could control democratically could not exist. In Russia these circumstances gave rise to the "vanguard" perversion of a socialist movement, one dominated by the leader and his political coterie, rotten with czarist secret agent and dedicated to the manipulation--not the education--of the masses.

Another reason may be the revolutionary romanticism engendered by accounts of the October insurrection in Petrograd. Here a conspiracy hatched by Lenin and his lieutenants set off an uprising by desperate workers in the Czarist capital, a major industrial center. Pawns in the Bolsheviks' grab for power via insurrection, they had no idea where they were headed nor how they would get there. The accounts of October paint a glorious picture from the Bolsheviks' Ten-Days-That-Shook-the-World perspective. They have provided generations of young radicals with fantasies of rocketing around the streets of Petrograd in an armored car, red flags flying, machine guns at the ready, providing Bolshevik leadership to the revolutionary masses. It is this elitist, vanguard view of socialist revolution that I believe may account for the insistence on illegal, physical forcism by JG and Internationalism.

The utter failure of the insurrectionary model of revolution can be seen in the defeats experienced by revolutionary workers who allowed themselves to be misled by Leninists between the world wars. This was made possible by a side benefit of the Russian Revolution. It gave Lenin and the Bolsheviks the opportunity to take command of the revolutionary wing of the socialist movement worldwide. One of the Twenty-One Points that Lenin insisted on as a condition of a party's joining the Third International was that it go underground or at least have an underground grouping that could lead an armed insurrection. Workers in such diverse places as Germany, Hungary, Canton and Shanghai, China paid with their lives for Leninist leadership. After WWII a variation, the Mao/Castro/Che Guevara peasant-based insurrectionary model became the style. We can see its fruits in Cuba and formerly in Nicaragua, where Leninist leadership built new nationalistic autocracies. Chiapas and Sub-Commandante Marcos are the most recent manifestation.

#### Marx, De Leon, and Revolutionary Strategy

Now to J.G.'s comments on DeLeonist tactics. Writings by the first generation of socialist theoreticians, Marx and Engels, cover roughly the half century from 1845 to 1895. The second generation--Kautsky, Liebknecht, De Leon, Luxemburg, and Lenin--were writing from perhaps 1880 to roughly 1920. During those decades capitalism was expanding rapidly and with it the number of wage slaves. At the same

time the system's response to the class struggle was undergoing change. As capitalism in the more advanced West abandoned the violent repression that greeted working class resistance to exploitation, Marx and Engels abandoned the conspiratorial groupings like the League of the Just and the Communist League, whose Manifesto they had written. By the mid 1860s they had helped to organize the International Workingmen's Association, a genuinely working class grouping based largely on the union movement in the West, a movement that could operate openly in the more advanced industrial countries. In 1871 the defeat of Paris Commune, the last spontaneous popular uprising on the old model, pretty much put an end to Blanquist/Bakuninist insurrectionary tactics for over thirty years.

An increasingly secure and confident capitalist class in the more advanced countries of the West began a policy of expanding the franchise to include the industrial working class and to coopt it. At the same time Marx's speech on legal revolution at the Hague Conference of the IWA marked his recognition of the changed circumstances and new possibilities for revolutionary activity. The expulsion of the Bakuninists in 1872 and the collapse of the IWA left the field open for new political organizations, electoral parties, that could take advantage of capitalism's new democratic opening in Western Europe and the U.S.

It was these new socialist and labor parties that organized the Second International. It was also in these new mass political parties that the idea of a legal, non-violent revolution developed. Unfortunately as socialist politicians became more successful at playing capitalism's wheeling and dealing political game, they adopted the role of mediator between capital and labor, at the same time compromising their revolutionary aims with reform programs that would attract more voters and increase their political strength. These reform programs called "immediate demands" effectively played into capitalist hands. At the same time capitalism took the lid off the economic class struggle by allowing workers to organize into unions. The union movement, because its natural role is that of mediator between workers and capitalists, is even more prone to compromise and the buying off of its leadership as U.S. labor history demonstrates.

By the late 1890s this reformism had spawned a reaction. Revolutionary factions opposing the reformers began to develop in the parties of the Second International. Major splits occurred in France, Great Britain, and the US., the last of which involved De Leon and the Socialist Labor Party where the reformists and capitalist unionists left the SLP to form the Socialist Party. As editor of the SLP's English language paper, the *People* and later its daily edition from 1892 to 1914, De Leon managed to steer a principled revolutionary socialist course that has no parallel in the socialist movement anywhere in the world. In the process he managed to antagonize every union bureaucrat and sellout artist, every "socialist" careerist, preacher, professor, in the U.S. These include the first generation of "socialist historians," among them his arch enemy Morris Hillquit whose *History of Socialism in the United States* denigrated the SLP, revolution, and Daniel De Leon. He died in May 1914 and didn't live to see the great betrayal as most of the reformist leaders of the great mass social democratic parties of the Second International--Germany, France, and Austria--rose to support the military ambitions of their respective capitalist classes by voting war credits.

During the nineties it became clear to De Leon and his supporters that the SLP would develop into another capitalist party as the opportunists and politically ambitious sought to increase the voter base of

the party by appealing to farmers and small business. At the same time control by corrupt labor leaders, "fakers" as De Leon called them, over the pro-capitalist union movement (the AFL and the Knights of Labor) had reached the point where they offered no room for socialist activity.

The SLP's first move was to organize a socialist union movement like that of the German Social Democratic Party as an alternative to the AFL/K of L. This Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance was based on New York City unions in which SLP members and supporters were influential. Its early success in organizing the unorganized and making some inroads on the AFL fiefdoms succeeded in arousing Gompers and the AFL to a high pitch of opposition. Pro-AFL and other reformist elements in the SLP quickly came to consider the DeLeonists who controlled the party obstacles to what they regarded as SLP success—becoming the reform wing of capitalism's political spectrum. At the same time the party under De Leon's guidance took an increasingly anti-reform stand as evidenced by his widely read speeches on the subject in 1896 and 1898. All this spawned the 1899-1900 split.

The next step in the evolution of the SLP under De Leon's aegis was his synthesis of European syndicalism with the revolutionary electoral politics of the SLP. In his 1904 speech *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism* and in his 1905 speech on the preamble to the constitution of the IWW, *Socialist Reconstruction of Society* he formulated a plan for revolution that depended not on leadership but on a working class educated to the need for socialism and having the organizations to accomplish it, a political party to express its will at the polls and an economic organization through which our class can accomplish the revolution by taking over the means of production.

#### Internationalism and Leninism

Now to Internationalism's commitment to those two bastions of Leninist theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the soviet or councilist system of revolutionary organization and post-revolutionary government. As to the former, the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" disappears from Marxist theoretical works for over forty years between Marx's brief reference to it in *The Gotha Program* (1875) and Lenin's resurrection of it in *The State and Revolution* (1917). The reason Lenin revived it is clear enough. He needed theoretical justification for the insurrection he was planning. Czarist Russia where a major part of industrial production was still carried on by artisans in small shops or in small factories, production was still in the same pre-industrial phase that Marx saw in Western Europe in the 1840s on up to 1875. Lenin believed that Russia could skip the period of capitalist development needed to concentrate production and to create the an industrial proletariat. He convinced his lieutenants in the Bolshevik party that they could gain enough immediate support from the desperate Petrograd working class and the soldiers garrisoned there to grab power and hold it. Of course this flies in the face of Marxist analysis as it existed in 1917 and we know it today, but there were enough superficial similarities to Marx's earlier thinking to convince people who wanted to be convinced. And of course after the Bolsheviks took control of the international revolutionary movement the dictatorship of the proletariat became an article of faith among Lenin's followers worldwide.

That Internationalism advances the workers' council concept of revolutionary organization is consistent with its Leninist ancestry. Actually, though, Lenin and the Bolsheviks opposed the spontaneous organization of workers' councils during the 1905 uprising in Petrograd until Trotsky demonstrated how a minor political grouping with the necessary discipline and an orator or two could put itself at the head



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of the workers council and determine its policies. It is the typical organization of a working class which has been driven by desperation to resist capitalism but which, because of the undeveloped nature of industry or because it has been kept in ignorance of what the next step must be, is unable to organize industrially.

As a revolutionary organization the councils have much in common with Committees of Safety and other pre-industrial revolutionary groupings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

#### Conclusion

One can only hope that JG and Internationalism will give up their Leninist visions of leading the working class into a Bolshevik dictatorship a la the USSR, China, and Cuba and come to realize that the task of revolutionaries is to educate our class about capitalist cause of their misery and the socialist solution. As to the future, it's impossible to predict just how our class will respond to the continuing immiseration we are experiencing. It's possible that, as De Leon predicted, the gang that runs the show will commit some act that reveals unmistakably their arrogance and contempt for our class in a way that will cause a spontaneous outpouring of anger that will make clear to our rulers that we have withdrawn our "consent." No political take over of the state will be necessary; it will collapse into itself like a black hole carrying with it the accumulated junk of the centuries of class control. As to the nature of the new society, I am enough of a DeLeonist to believe that its foundation will be the social ownership of the means of production and their democratic management the workers, perhaps as described the *New System* (see DB70).

Frank Girard

(From p. 2)

the stuff that was being discussed in the John Reed Clubs sixty years ago. Larry Gambone's letter criticizes Ed Wizek's example (DB73) of Chile as a country that shows the precariousness of a purely political change in this age of ruling class access to technology and the media. Gambone also comments on what he regards as *Subversion's* brief slip into elitism. AAA shares the Unabomber's primitivist views but has theoretical reservations about his (her, their) concentration on technology and also practical doubts about his barbarous, not to say primitive, methods—a reversion to the "propaganda of the deed" that once marked the tactics of some anarchists.

Adam Buick and I have another go at the old sectarian battle between World Socialists and DeLeonists. Although I have termed it "sectarian," we—and others involved in this debate—are arguing matters that will be crucial when capitalism folds. So too are the authors of the next article: another chapter in the ongoing discussion between the U.S. and the Canadian branches of the De Leonist Society about the changes in the cast-in-concrete socialist industrial union program being advocated by the Canadians.

Mikhail Tsovma's "News and Views" comes to us from an anarchist publication whose name I have lost. Perhaps the source will get in touch. At any rate readers can write to the address given. The term "intellectual" is not one of my favorites, and I wish Chomsky had resisted the urge to use it. Having said that and expressed my own view that intellectuals are usually for sale to the highest bidder, I think readers will be interested in the Chomsky's views on the subject. SEE's "challenge" was written by the Grand Rapids ecumenical anti-capitalism group at the height of the furor caused by Charles Murray's book. We distributed 1200 copies at his appearance at a local college and at various other meetings where the subject was discussed. We even included a few spelling mistakes proving that we are not part

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# South Africa

## Successful struggle for political democracy sets stage for next struggle for economic democracy

The victory of Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa is a tribute to the courageous struggle of the entire black population against the tyranny of apartheid.

The creation of a democratic State, where the people elect their political leaders, is a giant step forward for the people of South Africa. The basic political freedoms—the ballot, free speech, press and assembly—are rights the people need in order to attack an even more basic source of oppression than apartheid: the economic exploitation of the working class.

Unemployment in South Africa is estimated at 46%. In some of the black townships it exceeds 80%. Seven million black people live in shanty towns without electricity or plumbing.

The ANC, in its years as an outlawed organization leading the struggle against apartheid, recognized the connections between white rule, capitalism and the economic oppression of black workers.

Apartheid allowed the massive transfer of property, primarily land, from blacks to whites. It provided a huge supply of cheap

labor, with no right to organize, for both white farmers and industrial capitalists.

By reserving the best jobs for white workers, the apartheid regime gave them the illusion of having a stake in the system and thereby prevented the development of a united working-class movement. It was a bargain for South African (and foreign) corporations to buy off the white working-class minority in order to secure a super-exploited majority of black workers. Even today, white workers—where they still have jobs—get on average 10 times the pay of black workers.

While the ANC correctly recognized these links between apartheid and capitalism, its alliance with the South African Communist Party gave it the Communists' false and distorted concept of socialism.

The Soviet Union was pictured as the model of socialism, even though it was in fact a labor-exploiting state-capitalist system. The ANC called for the nationalization of basic industries, where workers would work for state bosses instead of corporate bosses, but still would not be working for

themselves, with their own elected management, as in a genuine socialist society.

When Soviet and East European "communism" collapsed, the ANC had to give up this economic program as a viable alternative to apartheid capitalism.

Meanwhile, the ruling National Party was under pressure from the rising rebellion of black people on the one hand, and on the other from a growing anti-apartheid sector within the white ruling class itself.

For those English-descended whites, who control more industry and finance in South Africa than the Dutch-descended Afrikaners, whose economic base is in agriculture, apartheid's restrictive work and residence controls on blacks prevented the kind of fluid labor market that works best for fast-changing industrial capitalism. Workers need to be easily recruited and moved into new factories and mines anywhere in the country if these corporations are to get the jump on their international competition.

Also, because apartheid denied black workers access to skilled jobs, and the educational



opportunities to qualify for them, employers had to bid up wages to attract employees from the relatively small pool of skilled white workers. Increasing the supply of skilled labor by allowing blacks to enter these trades would force down wages for skilled labor.

Added to these factors that made apartheid more of an economic detriment than an aid to industrial profit-making was the growing fear that the social upheaval caused by the people's struggle against apartheid would destroy the already recession-wracked economy.

Finally, opposition to apartheid within this wing of the ruling class was clinched by the demands of the rulers of the U.S. and West Europe. For their own strategic and economic reasons, the Western powers feared the growing social turmoil in South Africa and wanted it defused by having apartheid ended. And they pressured the South African government to do so with trade sanctions that further damaged South African capitalism.

The National Party, which had originated the apartheid system, now moved to dismantle it. With the ANC willing to drop its nationalization program with the collapse of Communism (and the end of financial aid from the no-longer Soviet Union), the industrial-financial wing of the white ruling class was assured that their property would not be endangered by a non-racial government headed by the ANC.

The National Party, un-

der the shrewd politician de Klerk, then moved to defuse the social upheaval in South Africa by releasing Mandela from prison and cutting a deal with the ANC.

For the land-based Afrikaner wing of the ruling class, however, apartheid remained a critical guarantee of a ready supply of landless black farm workers, who could be super-exploited at rock-bottom wages. They feared an ANC government would seek to take back the land that had originally been owned by black farmers, and which the white government had taken from them to give to white farmers.

This group split from the National Party to form the right-wing Conservative Party, pledged to retain apartheid, as were the proto-military, neo-fascist Afrikaner groups.

With the successful conclusion of the election, however, the extreme right is finished—at least for now. The real difficulty facing the ANC is how to fulfill its election promises of creating jobs and raising the living standards of black workers.

As part of the deal with the white ruling class, the National Party is included in the government, where it can closely monitor any action it might deem detrimental to the white business community. Since the resources needed for improving the lives of blacks are all owned by whites, the ANC is trapped by its own pledge—and its political reliance on the cooperation of the white business establishment—not to infringe on exist-

ing property rights.

It hopes to get around the impasse by enticing foreign investment into South Africa, which it hopes will spur the economy, lower unemployment and increase tax revenue to spend on social programs.

But South Africa is competing with all the other countries of the world for investment. While South Africa has an advantage over the rest of Africa by having an already developed industrial and financial infrastructure, the number-one bait for foreign investment is low-wage labor.

U.S., European and Japanese corporations will want guarantees from the ANC that black South Africans' low wages will stay that way if they open new production facilities there. They will want assurances the government will maintain "social peace," that production won't be disrupted by strikes or political agitation. The capitalists' conditions for new investment and jobs in South Africa will be that the living standards of the majority of South African workers do *not* improve.

The ANC was allowed into the government because it accepted these economic constraints placed on it by South African and foreign capital. In doing so, it has transformed itself from a liberation movement of black South Africans into an enforcement agent for white business interests.

The reward for the top leadership of the ANC—including Mandela—is to enjoy the same luxurious lifestyle as the the white

business and political elites. The ANC leaders now have a stake in the system, a stake that they will soon be defending alongside their white partners *against* the just demands of the great majority of black people, who remain the *victims* of the system.

The next phase of the

struggle in South Africa is about to begin. This time it will not be on the lines of race, but strictly on the lines of class: between those who profit by exploiting labor, aligned with their political agents of all races, and the workers of all races, whose lives are impoverished by being the victims of exploitation.

The goal of this struggle is to add to the already achieved political emancipation of black people the *economic* emancipation of the working class. It is a struggle not confined to South Africa, but one still needing to be fought to its conclusion in every country of the world. ☐

WHAT CAN A POOR PUNK DO, SEP TO PLAY FOR ROCK 'N ROLL BAND?

AUTHOR: Home, Stewart, 1962-

AUTHOR: TITLE: Defiant pose : a novel / Stewart Home.  
IMPRINT: AK Press \$24.95 or £13.95  
167 p. ; 22 cm.

AUTHOR: Home, Stewart, 1962-

TITLE: Pure Mania.

IMPRINT: AK Press  
217 p.

\$17.95 or £8.95

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Stewart Home's words scream off the pages of his novels like the tires of a muscle car torqued to the max by a driver bent on reaching 60 mph in 4 seconds flat. Like De Sade, Home writes the fiction of the unrestrained libido responding to the "primitive rhythm of the swamps". Like Durruti, Home's heroines and heroes don't waste time or mince words when it comes to the pursuit of revolution.

These proletarian punk/hippie/red-skin protagonists run wild through the streets of a London painted blood red and pockmarked with the random terror and banality of war--class war. The enemies of these lumpen/working class men and wimin are an odd assortment of fascists, liberals, leninists, conservatives and self-seeking opportunists. These denizens of class rule are met with utter contempt by Home's liberated characters as they variously smash would be dominators and fuck the deserving among the masochists, while they discover each other along the myriad of public places and transit points dotting the greater London metroscape.

Admittedly, Home's plots have a surreal quality to them. The sex is, to be frank, very frequent and extremely varied. The violence is bone crushing graphic. The politics are intoxicating, concise, critical, crude and to the point. The writing is minimalist.

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In PURE MANIA, Home sets up a scenario where rival rock bands compete for the sympathies of a subculture, struggling to find its way to predominance. Meanwhile, in an alliance with militant vegetarians--the Vegans--a former CND man, turned 40ish, neo-nazi boot licker, gets turned again, this time towards the anarcho-organic revolutionary ideals of a younger, sexually liberated feminist. A sub plot, concerning the business and politics of rival rock 'n roll bands weaves its way through the novel, culminating in an explosive finale which brings the rockers and the Vegans together, in of all places, an art museum. Looks like class conflict will be on the agenda of this London, until, of course, classes are made to disappear.

DEFIANT POSE gives the reader yet another glimpse into Mr. Home's imagination. It is again the city of London as stage. The city, it seems, has been increasingly dividing itself into sharply defined political spheres. The fascist leader of the "Cockney Nation" must compromise his "principles" when he is blackmailed by the crypto-leninist cop of the British state's super secret "Seven" branch. The little Cockney fuehrer is commanded to start a race war in order to allow the "anti-fascists", under the leadership of a submerged leninist vanguard, to seize power and impose order on the fragmenting British society. The protagonist, an anarcho-nihilist skinhead/bisexual "bootboy", makes his living turning out homemade porn films in his apartment--films with a revolutionary message. He routinely video tapes his sexual encounters with consenting adults, while for example, reciting memorized passages of the ECONOMIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL MANUSCRIPTS of Karl Marx, as an aside to other oral gymnastics. The "boot boy" will eventually be one of the sparks which set off a train of events leading to the sacking of Parliament, destruction of monuments--Big Ben comes crashing to the ground--and a street fight to end all street fights as a united, colorful working-class whips the fascists' asses.

If for no other reason, you should read Stewart Home because he's a kick--a working class cultural kick at the ruling ideas and ruling class of our times. Beware though. The milieu his characters move within may not be your "cuppa". But with that said, if you still dare, pick up these books and turn the page; you have nothing to lose but a few hours of TV.

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Dear DB.

I am afraid I don't agree with Ed Wizek's comments on the WSM's majoritarian position and the Allende government of Chile. There is no comparison. The UP never even got a simple majority, the highest percentage was 45. You can't fuel a revolution with a minority like that. You need the vast majority of the population, which I assume is the WSM position. If 80-90% supported the UP, it could never have been overthrown.

Wizek overlooks the fact that not just latifundist reactionaries were opposed to the UP. Many middle class people and not a few workers were opposed to it out of fear of Stalinism. They did not particularly fear Allende, the SP or the Radical Party UP members, rather the CP and the MIR. These mostly Christian Democrat supporters, at the time a party more like the Br. Labour Party than a right-wing grouping, did not want Chile to become another Cuba. In supporting the military takeover, they never dreamed that a bloodbath would occur. Nor was worker unrest simply CIA inspired. After making all kinds of promises the UP found things getting out of control. It was quite natural that certain sectors of the working population would turn against the government - even though it was supposedly "their" government. By no stretch of the imagination could the UP be considered socialist. State capitalist or state socialist, but certainly not what most DB correspondents would mean by the term.

Subversion - an excellent critique of the left, that vanguard of bureaucratization. However your interpretation of democracy and the reasons for leftism's development are crude. It is as though E.P. Thompson and Christopher Hill had never existed. You need to do a real in depth study of social history rather than reduce a highly complex development down to rhetoric about con jobs. In other words, you still remain in the left, you haven't broken with that reductionist, conspiratorial, and hyperbolic frame of mind that characterizes leftism. And please do your homework before you start telling us what to believe.

Blaming working people for accepting "bourgeois democracy" also smacks of leftist elitism. The fact is, democracy originally meant direct democracy and this was how the working population saw it and was what they strived for. The fact that they were defeated and elite democracy replaced the original concept is not really their fault. Condemning the notion of "the people" is also anachronistic. Modern classes were not fully formed in 1789. There was no real industrial bourgeoisie and the few manufacturers in their tiny factories were originally master craftsmen. Politically, on one side, stood the financial or mercantilist bourgeoisie tied to the *ancien regime* and on the other, the artisans, peasants, professionals and nascent industrialists, i.e., the people. Hence, the concept was not fraudulent, but was an accurate description of reality. So too with populist movements in the US. "People" meant the farmers, artisans and industrial workers who faced a common enemy in the railroad barons and banking interests.

Larry Gambone

Technogogues and technopaths we have had with us for some time. The Artificial Intelligence pioneer Marvin Minsky, for instance, was well-known in the early 1980s for his description of the human brain as "a 3 pound computer made of meat." He was featured in the December 1983 issue of *Psychology Today*, occasioning the following letter:

Marvin Minsky:

With the wholly uncritical treatment—nay, giddy embrace—of high technology, even to such excrescences as machine "emotions" which you develop and promote, *Psychology Today* has at least made it publicly plain what's intended for social life.

Your dehumanizing work is a prime contribution to high tech's accelerating motion toward an ever more artificial, de-individualized, empty landscape.

I believe I am not alone in the opinion that vermin such as you will one day be considered among the worst criminals this century has produced.

(Signed) In revulsion, John Zerzan

A dozen years later the number of those actively engaged in the desolation of the soul and the murder of nature has probably risen; but support for the entire framework of such activity has undoubtedly eroded.

Enter Unabomber (he/she/they) with a critique, in acts as well as words, of our sad, perverse, and increasingly bereft technological existence. Unabomber calls for a return to "wild nature" via the "complete and permanent destruction of modern industrial society in every part of the world," and the replacement of that impersonal, unfree, and alienated society by that of small, face-to-face social groupings. He has killed three and wounded 23 in the service of this profoundly radical vision.

There are two somewhat obvious objections to this theory and practice. For one thing, a return to undomesticated autonomous ways of living would not be achieved by the removal of industrialism alone. Such removal would still leave domination of nature, subjugation of women, war, religion, the state, and division of labor, to cite some basic social pathologies. It is civilization itself that must be undone to go where Unabomber wants to go. In other words, the wrong turn for humanity was the Agricultural Revolution, much more fundamentally than the Industrial Revolution.

In terms of practice, the mailing of explosive devices intended for the agents who are engineering the present catastrophe is too random. Children, mail carriers and others could easily be killed. Even if one granted the legitimacy of striking at the high-tech horror show by terrorizing its indispensable architects, collateral harm is not justifiable.

Meanwhile, Unabomber operates in a context of massive psychic immiseration and loss of faith in all of the system's institutions. How many moviegoers, to be more specific, took issue with *Terminator 2* and its equating of science and technology with death and destruction? Keay Davidson's "A Rage Against Science" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 4/30/95) observed that Unabomber's "avowed hatred of science and technological trends reflects growing popular disillusionment with science."

A noteworthy example of the resonance that his sweeping critique of the modern world enjoys is "The Evolution of Despair" by Robert Wright, cover story of *TIME* for August 28. The long article discusses Unabomber's indictment soberly and sympathetically, in an effort to plumb "the source of our pervasive sense of discontent."

At the same time, not surprisingly, other commentators have sought to minimize the possible impact of such ideas. "Unabomber Manifesto Not Particularly Unique" is the dismissive summary John Schwartz provided for the August 20 *Washington Post*. Schwartz found professors who would loftily attest to the unoriginality of fundamental questioning of society, as if anything like that goes on in classrooms. Ellul, Juenger and others with a negative view of technology are far from old hat; they are unknown, not a part of accepted, respectable discourse. The cowardice and dishonesty typical of professors and journalists could hardly be more clearly represented.

Also easily predictable has been the antipathy to Unabomber-type ideas from the liberal-left. "Unabomber" was Alexander Cockburn's near-hysterical denunciation in *The Nation*, August 28/September 4. This pseudo-critic of U.S. capitalism rants about Unabomber's "homicidal political nuttiness," the fruit of an "irrational" American anarchist tradition. Cockburn says that Unabomber represents a "rotted-out romanticism of the individual and of nature," that nature is gone forever and we'd better accept its extinction. In reply to this effort to vilify and marginalize both Unabomber and anarchism, Bob Black points out (unpublished letter to the editor) the worldwide resurgence of anarchism and finds Unabomber expressing "the best and the predominant thinking in contemporary North American anarchism, which has mostly gotten over the workerism and productivism which it too often used to share with Marxism."

In spring '95 Earth First! spokesperson Judy Bari labeled Unabomber "a sociopath," going on to declare, definitively but mistakenly, that "there is no one in the radical environmental movement who is calling for violence." This is not the place to adequately discuss the politics of radical environmentalism, but Bari's pontificating sounds like the voice of the many anarcho-liberals and anarcho-pacifists who wish to go no further in defense of the wild than tired, ineffective civil disobedience, and who brandish such timid and compromised slogans as "no deforestation without representation."

The summer '95 issue of *Slingshot*, tabloid of politically correct Berkeley militants, contained a brief editorial trashing Unabomber for creating "the real danger of government repression" of the radical milieu. The fear that misplaces blame on Unabomber overlooks the simple fact that any real blows against the Megamachine will invite responses from our enemies. The specter of repression is most effectively banished by doing nothing.

For their part, the "anarchists" of *Love and Rage* (August/September) have also joined the anti-Unabomber leftist chorus. Wayne Price's "Is the Unabomber an Anarchist?" concedes, with Bob Black, that "most anarchists today do not regard the current development of industrial technology as 'progressive' or even 'neutral,' as do Marxists and liberals." But after giving this guarded lip-service to the ascendancy of Unabomber-like ideas, Price virulently decries Unabomber as "a murderer dragging noble ideas through the mud" and withholds even such political and legal support that he would accord authoritarian leftists targeted by the state. *Love and Rage* is defined by a heavy-handed, manipulative organize-the-masses ideology; approaches that are more honest and more radical are either ignored or condemned by these politicians.

But this selective mini-survey of opposition to Unabomber does not by any means exhaust the range of responses. There are other perspectives, which have mainly, for obvious reasons, been expressed only privately. Some of us, for one thing, have found a glint of hope in the public appearance, at last, of a challenge to the fundamentals of a depraved landscape. In distinction to the widespread feeling that everything outside of the self is beyond our control, the monopoly of lies has been broken. It might be said that Unabomber's (media) impact is here today, only to be forgotten tomorrow. But at least a few will have been able to understand and remember. The irony, of course, is that lethal bombings were necessary for an alternative to planetary and individual destruction to be allowed to be heard.

The concept of justice should not be overlooked in considering the Unabomber phenomenon. In fact, except for his targets, when have the many little Eichmanns who are preparing the Brave New World ever been called to account? Where is any elementary personal responsibility when the planners of our daily and global death march act with complete impunity?

The ruling order rewards such destroyers and tries to polish their image. The May 21 *New York Times Magazine's* "Unabomber and David Gelernter" humanizes the latter, injured by a Unabomber bomb at Yale, as a likable computer visionary preparing a "Renaissance of the human spirit." From no other source than the article itself, however, it is clear that Gelernter is helping to usher in an authoritarian dystopia based on all the latest high-tech vistas, like genetic engineering.

Is it unethical to try to stop those whose contributions are bringing an unprecedented assault on life? Or is it unethical to just accept our passive roles in the current zeitgeist of postmodern cynicism and know-nothingism? As a friend in California put it recently, when justice is against the law, only outlaws can effect justice.

The lengthy Unabomber manuscript will go undiscussed here; its strengths and weaknesses deserve separate scrutiny. These remarks mainly shed light on some of the various, mostly negative commentary rather than directly on their object. It is often the case that one can most readily learn about society by watching its reactions, across the spectrum, to those who would challenge it.

"Well, I believe in FC/Unabomber--it's all over the country...his ideas are, as the situationists said, 'in everyone's heads'; it's just a matter of listening to yer own rage," from a Midwesterner in the know. Or as Anne Eisenberg, from Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, admitted, "Scratch most people and you'll get a Luddite."

And from the *Boulder Weekly*, Robert Perkinson's July 6, '95 column sagely concluded: "Amidst the overwhelming madness of unbridled economic growth and postmodern disintegration, is such nostalgia, or even such rage, really crazy? For many, especially those who scrape by in unfulfilling jobs and peer longingly toward stars obscured by beaming street lights, the answer is probably no. And for them, the Unabomber may not be a psychopathic demon. They may wish FC the best of luck."

AAA/PO Box 11331/Eugene, Oregon 97440

(From p. 7)

of the cultural elite. The DB ends as usual with some notes, announcements and short reviews.

## BULLETIN MATTERS

### Finances

The bill for copier repair from last June finally arrived. The total was \$136, and the DB's half, included in this report, brings expenses for these two months far above receipts. We are still in the black, but another big ticket item looms on the horizon, the annual non-profit bulk mailing fee, which rose last January to \$85, is due by the end of December. The cost of mailing the DB has risen as witnessed by

(To p. 17)



Dear Frank

I too am prepared to let readers judge for themselves whether or not the SPGB holds "a purely parliamentary conception of revolution" by reading the chapter from our pamphlet you reproduce in DB73.

The trouble is, Frank, that you have read the chapter with a preconceived view. You have already concluded that "the role of workers once they have voted for socialism appears to be little more than waiting for the political state and the new socialist administration to institute socialism". This is not what the chapter actually says but merely what it "appears" to you to say. But at least it provides a definition of the sort of view that a group that was committed to "a purely parliamentary conception of revolution" would have to hold.

What the chapter actually says (read it again) is that it is the "socialist movement" which will prepare programmes of action in advance of the actual winning of political control (and these programmes will concern economic and other matters as well as the reorganisation of the administrative and decision-making structure which this particular chapter is concerned with), institute common ownership, extend democratic control, abolish the state, etc. In other words, the socialist movement as a whole will do these things, not just the particular persons it happens to have mandated and delegated to undertake particular tasks on the political field.

It is also significant that the term employed is "socialist movement" rather than "socialist party", thus bringing out that the movement for socialism will not be narrowly political but a broad social movement embracing other things besides the winning of political control (which in any event is not the goal but merely a means towards achieving the social revolution which is the goal). These other things will include education, the arts, relations between the sexes as well as the control and running of industry, so we really are talking about a broad revolutionary movement.

But how can this movement for socialism organise itself? Anyone who knows anything about the SPGB will know that one of the things we have always said is that workers don't need leaders. "Leaders Get Lost!" has been one of our slogans over the years. So what we envisage is organisation without leaders. This can only be on the basis of mandated and revokeable delegates.

And this is where you make your second mistake: you assume that when we say workers vote for delegates we mean they will vote for them in the same way they vote for elected politicians today, i.e. they put an 'X' on a ballot paper (or whatever) and then go away and do nothing, leaving the elected person a free hand to get on with the job. But this is not at all what is involved in the concept of a delegate.

A delegate is not someone you simply vote for and then leave them to it. A delegate is someone you continually mandate and keep an eye on to ensure that they actually carry out your mandate. So delegating someone is not at all a passive thing; it implies active participation. Since it is impossible for the working class as a whole to do everything at a mass meeting of the whole class, delegates are necessary, indeed inevitable. And this is true whether or not the working class organises to win political control.

Presumably you envisage delegates and voting for them existing in your non- or anti-political conception of revolution. But would it be a valid argument to say: "the role of the workers once they have sent delegates to the Workers Councils appears to be little more than waiting for the members of the Workers Councils to institute socialism"? And if not, why not? Why can you envisage workers actively controlling delegates they send to some central federation of Workers Councils but be unable to do so with any delegates they might send into parliament or local councils?

Finally, to finish on a point of agreement, I agree with you that it is pointless to seek to lay down now how the revolution should proceed. That's not up to us but will be decided by the socialist majority (hopefully including us) at the time. But I also agree with James Connolly who, when asked if he agreed with the new preamble the IWW adopted in 1908 which (ostensibly) repudiated the principle of political action, replied: "It will be impossible to prevent the workers taking it".

Yours for Socialism, Adam Buick, 40 Granville Gardens, London W5.

Dear Comrades,

One of the major tragedies of the Russian Revolution has been the suspicion created among our class as to the real motives and objectives of socialists. And this suspicious attitude is found even among members of revolutionary parties and groups, all of whom regard other such groups with the deepest distrust. We look for evidence of their evil intent in their every utterance and publication. Even worse, we may not believe that they consciously seek to subvert the socialist goal; it is enough that they are the unwitting, misguided carriers of policies that we choose to believe will betray the revolution when it comes. It is in this deeply suspicious, not to say paranoid, spirit that I respond to Adam Buick's letter.

First consider the term "socialist movement," which Adam implies differs from the Socialist Party of Great Britain but would help in the preparation of programs of action. The problem is that I suspect that any "movement" that Adam and the SPGB consider socialist will be identical to the SPGB and its "Companion Parties" which constitute what the SPGB now regards as the World Socialist Movement. All of these accept the SPGB's eight-point "Declaration of Principles." Any group which doesn't accept these eight points isn't socialist. If I am wrong about this, perhaps Adam will list for us the other socialist grouping, that he and the SPGB believe are entitled to be included in the socialist movement.

Now to the matter of "delegates." Here we have something new. I was under the impression that the SPGB intended to carry out the abolition of capitalism through parliament where it will have won control through elections. If the "delegates" Adam is talking about are the members of parliament, how do the voters have any more control over their actions than they do now? Also, simply calling the representative of workers a delegate and saying that he is mandated doesn't really change anything. It is the nature of political leaders--and the people who will be elected will be just that: leaders--who look out for themselves and "do politics." As for the mandate and the possibility for recall of an erring socialist delegate, its effectiveness, as we have it in the U.S., is nearly zero.

Last, Adam seems to have DeLeonists confused with those Leninist types who insist on

making the delegated workers councils, which Lenin, Trotsky, and the Bolshevik Party found so easy to manipulate, the revolutionary institutions in the highly industrialized West. The advantage of the socialist industrial unions, advocated by DeLeonists, is that they are based on the workplace. When our class has reached the point where it feels confident enough, it can make the collective decision to walk into the workplaces, organize production and begin production for use rather than for the market. This *is* the revolution. We don't have to mess around with the banking system, property titles and deeds, and stocks, bonds, and money. In other words we don't have to "dismantle" capitalism. Whether our class will decide afterward to elect socialists to office and legally put an end to capitalism and the state hardly matters. Perhaps we will let the displaced capitalists and their politicians continue to play their game, like British aristocrats with their titles, robes, tiaras, and rituals that seem to make them happy.

Most DeLeonists agree with the SPGB on the need for political action, at least in the abstract, partly because organizing as a political party confers legality on the movement and distances it from groupings that lay themselves open to repression and police surveillance because of their openly physical forcist policies. In this connection, James Connolly's remark about the IWW giving up political action referred to the 1908 IWW convention at which the anarchist element was able to strike the political clause from the Preamble to the constitution. It resulted in the SLP's exit from the IWW and the organization of the Detroit IWW which retained the political clause.

I too wish to end this on a positive note. To my way of thinking the SPGB and its companion--as well as dissident--parties, the SLP along with all dissident DeLeonists groups, and the anarchists of some--but not all--persuasions constitute the real revolutionaries of our times. I suspect that the growth of a revolutionary movement among our class could be hastened by greater cooperation among us. Unfortunately I don't have any ideas about how to accomplish this.

Frank Girard

(From p. 14)

the \$120 we now spend for postage. The cost of paper has also sky rocketed in recent months. The cost of five reams of the cheapest legal size copy paper needed for an issue has risen from around \$17 to \$25 in less than a year. How can we small businessmen hope to survive?

**Contributions:** Phillip Colligan \$7; Mario Petrilli \$4; Rado Mijanovich \$35; Harry Wade "In memory of Ben Perry" \$50; Willy Eckert \$7; Mike Ballard \$5; Lynn Olson \$2; Paul Burkett \$7. Total \$117. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE                                      September 2, 1995                                      \$97.30

#### RECEIPTS

Contributions	\$ 117.00
Subs and sales	<u>73.00</u>
Total	\$ 190.00

#### DISBURSEMENTS

Copier repair	68.00
Postage	\$ 120.00
Postage due	10.65

(To p. 24)



In accordance with our declared intention, reported in previous issues, we here continue reproduction of the inter-party debates on our position paper of the above title. The following is an exchange between our society and Ann Braunstein of The De Leonist Society of the U.S.

Dear Comrades:

I have studied your position paper "Democracy--Political and Industrial." It is my opinion that it proposes a step backward and not forward, and I vote against adopting it as a position paper of the DeLeonist Society.

You state that the Socialist Industrial Union Congress would be qualified to deal only with matters related to manufacture and distribution of products and not qualified to deal with social issues. I disagree.

The SIU Congress would have representatives from every segment of society; every branch of manufacture, education, medicine, the many sciences, the environment, natural resources, recreation, the different arts, etc., etc. Is there any one of these "industries" that does not involve "social issues"?

And it is definitely not "elitist" to believe that those who specialize in a particular "industry," and who no longer must function under the restraints that capitalism imposed on them, would indeed be qualified to address and advise the Congress on matters that involve their "industry."

Since, to your way of thinking, the Socialist industrial unions and the SIU Congress are not suitable vehicles to deal with social issues, you argue that we must have a separate political organization once again based on geographic constituencies to deal with those issues. That, to me, is the very antithesis of the integrated Republic of Labor.

To explain why a separate political organization is needed, you say that the workers in the industrial unions could not "be reasonably expected to welcome, much less sift through and evaluate for possible social legislation and administration an expected flood of recommendations....on urgent social matters" while on their jobs.

You do not tell us why the workers must carry on their discussions and evaluations while "on the job," and why these very same workers would "have the time and be in the necessary relaxed frame of mind to do justice to the aforementioned social questions" in a political geographic setting, but not in their industrial unions which would be in place from the start. (And, incidentally, many of the matters you list as "issues," are issues in our present class-divided society, and would not be issues at all in a sane Socialist society.)

It is your assumption that only those engaged in active production would have a voice and vote in the industrial unions. Since in all DeLeonist literature it has been stated that the employed and unemployed would be integrated into the industrial unions, is it not conceivable that every individual would remain a lifetime member of his or her union? However, it is not our place now to set down the specifics; we can only speculate. I think the following, which appears in an old Labor News pamphlet, says it best:

"The Socialist Republic is not to be poured like cast iron into a mould fashioned by

us now.

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"The constitution of the Socialist Republic will grow out of and be a concrete expression of the experience of the movement which brought it forth. It will most surely recognize, protect, and guarantee the rights of the individual in his or her use of the basic opportunities of life; and its experience will determine the best way of maintaining those rights in perpetuity."

Faternally,

(signed) Ann Braunstein

Dear Comrade Braunstein:

Replying now to the arguments you raised in opposition to our thesis, **Democracy--Political and Industrial.**

First it should be noted for the record that in objecting to our proposed blend of political and industrial democracy (i.e., that socialist democracy should henceforth be based not only on industrial but also on geographic constituencies), neither you nor Comrade Banks nor Comrade Emanuel nor Comrade Teichert chose to confront the central contradiction which we drew to your attention in the opening page of our thesis, to wit:

"Does the difficulty not now become apparent? 'The people' will enjoy free speech under Socialism; 'the people' will have 'a democratic mastery of their lives'; 'the people' will enjoy unfettered freedom 'to question, to criticize and to suggest'--in short, while 'the people' will have all this, will they also have a vote? No, not according to the above delineation! While 'the people' will at last have 'a democratic mastery of their lives,' the said mastery does not accord them the right to vote! Not the people as a whole but only that segment of them actively engaged in production will have both voice and vote!"

In short, it seems evident to us that rather than deal with that difficulty you and the other responders have sought to rationalize the problem out of existence by the novel expedient of attempting to squeeze the entire adult population into the confines of the industrial constituencies!

However, upon due reflection it should become obvious to you (and to the other comrades) that even apart from its forbidding physical aspect, such exercise must needs be incurably flawed from the start. Merely consider your second and third paragraphs as they relate to one another:

"You state that the Socialist Industrial Union Congress would be qualified to deal only with matters related to manufacture and distribution of products and not qualified to deal with social issues. I disagree.

"The SIU Congress would have representatives from every segment of society: every branch of manufacture, education, medicine, the many sciences, the environment, natural resources, recreation, the different arts, etc., etc. Is there any one of these 'industries' that does not involve 'social issues'?"

First as regards your question, "Is there any one of these 'industries' that does not involve 'social issues'?" If you will re-read our thesis

you will see that we had already covered that point. Quoting from its page 2, as follows:

"Today, however, the 'legislative work' that would confront a Socialist Industrial Union Congress is 'easy' and 'simple' no longer; on the contrary, it has become infinitely complex!.... now as we near the end of the century it is obvious that Socialism must inherit a host of grave social problems generated and/or exacerbated by moribund Capitalism; now a Socialist Administration would have to deal not only with questions directly related to production but also with questions indirectly related to it, many of which require value judgements not anent production per se." (And here we suggested 8 examples of such!)

But now as to what we see as an "incurable flaw" in your position. Disagreeing with us that the SIU Congress would not be qualified to deal with social issues, you claim the Congress would be so qualified because it "would have representatives from every segment of society: every branch of manufacture, education, medicine, the many sciences, the environment, natural resources, recreation, the different arts, etc., etc." But we can think of two very important and very large "segments of society" that do NOT fit into the industrial union framework, segments that appear to defy efforts to so fit them--segments of society that are therefore **disfranchised!** We refer to retirees for one, housewives for another, and will take up this matter in some detail before closing.

Proceeding now to deal with the remainder of your points seriatim:

(1) Question: "And it is definitely not 'elitist' to believe that those who specialize in a particular 'industry,'...would indeed be qualified to address and advise the [SIU] Congress on matters that involve their 'industry.'"

Comment: At no time did we say it was! In fact we are quite certain that representatives of 'particular industries' will constantly be called on to 'address and advise' both the SIU Congress (on matters related to their industries) as well as the proposed political legislative assembly (on matters of social policy). What we took exception to was what we regard as the **Weekly People's** unfortunate assertion that teachers could "address and advise" on social policy generally "with far more understanding and intelligence than a political party." (Our emphasis.) Taking "political party" (or political representatives) to mean input from society-at-large, we think that while society should listen to teachers (or any other segment of workers) it is crucial to democracy that society should have the last word on social policy which, in the case of the "education industry," means **what is to be taught!** And while we would not argue that society in general could be expected to be as well versed in specific subjects as are the teachers of those subjects, we nevertheless believe that society has the "understanding and intelligence," as well as the duty, to itself determine broad educational curricula under which it might wish its offspring to be nurtured. What we visualize here are two branches of government working together, the political determining **social policy** and the industrial (SIU) executing that policy. We might add here that, far from being deprived of democracy, active workers would be doubly blessed in that they would have their voice and vote on the in-



dustrial field (on matters directly related to their industries), also on the political field (on questions of social policy).

Finally under this head, by way of clinching our point, we would again quote the passage from Thomas Jefferson that appeared in the May-June, '94 issue of the *De Leonist Society Bulletin*.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise that control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion."

(2) Question: "...you argue that we must have a separate political organization once again[sic!] based on geographic constituencies..." (Our emphasis.)

Comment: We do not argue for a re-institution of geographic constituencies but for their retention!

(3) Question: "That [i.e., geographic constituencies] to me, is the very antithesis of the integrated Republic of Labor."

Comment: We are puzzled why you project the geographic and industrial constituencies as being in opposition to one another. We see each form performing a necessary function in socialist democracy--the one industrial, the other political--two branches of government working in close and harmonious relation.

(4) Question: "You do not tell us why the workers must carry on their discussion and evaluations while 'on the job...'" (i.e., while in the workplace.)

Comment: But of course it is not WE but THE SLP PROGRAM that did the telling! For instance:

\*See again our analysis of the *Weekly People's* October 26, 1963 Question Period column (page 4 of our thesis). Quoting as follows:

"'A Socialist Industrial Union government...opens all the avenues of information and creates meaningful forums for the discussion of social as well as economic problems.' (Our emphasis.)

"Comment: Where are the forums on social problems to be opened up? and Who will be involved in their discussion? Answer--'In every school, factory, mine, ship, distribution facility, etc., questions of public interest...may be discussed by the rank and file in shop councils...'"

\*Quoting from the leaflet, *SOCIALISM THE WORLD OF TOMORROW*:

"Possessed of a voice and vote where they work [leaflet's emphasis], all who perform socially useful tasks will democratically elect from their ranks the representatives who are to administer the economy on all levels from the local to the national....Moreover, in their various economic units (shops, schools, hospitals, etc.) they will regularly and frequently discuss the problems of their respective industries as well as those of society in general, and thereby help to formulate the nation's programs."

\* Quoting from the chart depicting **Socialist Industrial Union Representation**: "YOU CAST YOUR BALLOT IN YOUR SHOP FOR....PLANT COUNCIL" etc.

But what of **social issues**? Since neither the chart nor SLP literature makes other provision, the shop is presumably the place where the rank and file workers would not only "discuss and evaluate" social issues but the place where they would also "cast their ballots" for resolution of these issues!

(5) **Question**: "You do not tell us...why these very same workers would 'have the time and be in the necessary relaxed frame of mind to do justice to the aforementioned **social** questions' in a political geographic setting, but not in their industrial unions which would be in place from the start. (And, incidentally, many of the matters you list as 'issues,' are issues in our present class-divided society, and would not be issues at all in a sane Socialist society.)"

**Comment**: We did attempt to tell you! Quoting from page 4 of our Position Paper:

"The SIU's job will be to conduct production to the end that an abundance is produced with a minimum of labor--to not only ascertain, in De Leon's words, 'the wealth needed, the wealth producible and the work required,' but also to **perform** that work. How can workers reasonably be expected to do this while simultaneously spending the great amount of time that will be required to review, discuss, debate, formulate and implement solutions for the many social problems not directly related to production? Just ask yourselves if, when at work, you have, or would have had, the time or even the inclination to attempt this manifold task. No comrades, it is in their leisure hours, **after** workers have performed their industrial chores, that they will have the time and be in the necessary relaxed frame of mind to do justice to the aforementioned **social** questions."

We stick to our position that such combination of demands upon workers' attention would prove, to put it mildly, highly impractical! If no other "setting" than the industrial constituency had been conceived for resolution of social issues, then of course that would be that. But this is not the case. The geographic constituency was conceived long, long ago, is here now, and stripped of class content appears to us the one practical answer to the problem. You have yet to tell us why it cannot serve the needs of socialist democracy. Incidentally, as to your suggestion that the SIU would not be overburdened with social issues because "many" of those extant would disappear under Socialism: while over varying periods of time many would undoubtedly do so, you appear to discount the probability that from time to time new issues would arise.

(6) **Question**: "It is your assumption that only those engaged in active production would have a voice and vote in the industrial unions."

**Comment**: Correction! This is no assumption on our part but (as detailed on page 3 of this letter) is a condition that is **explicit** in the SLP program!

(7) **Question**: "Since in all DeLeonist literature it has been stated that the employed and **unemployed** [your emphasis] would be integrated into the industrial unions..."

**Comment**: In our view the references in SLP literature to the fact that the SIU will include both the "employed and unemployed" refer to the

SIU's formative period under Capitalism when all active (and potentially active) workers will be included in its ranks. In addition, where the context becomes a socialist society we have yet to discover where the literature states there will be unemployed workers to integrate.

(8) Question: "...is it not conceivable that every individual would remain a lifetime member of his or her union?"

Comment: Certainly it is conceivable, but to what end in the case of retirees except recognition of services rendered to society? This aspect of the matter is closely related to the question of practicality previously touched on. Consider for example:

\* We believe your implication that retirees might well continue to participate in workplace forums is based upon the unwarranted assumption that retirees in general would desire to do so.

\* It is also reasonable to assume that, with few exceptions, retired workers would tend to lose touch with the productive processes in their former industries and would therefore no longer qualify for voice and vote on day-to-day industrial matters.

\* Retirees are on average living longer than before thus comprise a larger segment of society. Not only that, but Socialism holds the promise of early voluntary retirement thus a likelihood of a still wider gap between the work force (the active producers) and the rest of society. The logistics of seating everyone concerned (work force plus retirees) at forums within the workplace does not appear to have a practical solution.

\* The proposition that retirees should participate in the forums of their former workplaces has in our opinion still another unrealistic side. It is based on the assumption that, by and large, retirees will continue to live in the same locality, or even in the same region, as before.

\* In addition to retirees there is yet another large segment of adult society that stands outside social production, and this is perhaps the most important but least acknowledged of all. We speak of housewives! In what forums are they to gather to exercise voice and vote?

(9) Question: "However, it is not our place now to set down the specifics..."

Comment: We see no reason to take issue with the specifics of Socialist Industrial Union organization as detailed by De Leon in his March 23, 1910 editorial entitled **Industrialism**. (See pamphlet **INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM --Selected Editorials**.) What we take issue with is an apparently recent misconception on the part of our U.S. comrades that society-at-large can be compressed into the perimeter of the Socialist Industrial Union! For as De Leonists we hold that it is not only our "place" but our duty to question whenever we believe a question is necessary.

\*

Let us repeat the essence of what we conveyed in our thesis,  
**Democracy--Political and Industrial:**

With hindsight it has become obvious to us that the greatest obstacle to acceptance of political democracy (the geographic constituency) has been and is an erroneous and persistent habit of thought, namely, that **class rule and political democracy are two sides of the same coin!** De Leon's substitution of the industrial constituency for the geographic constituency for the dual purpose of dislodging the capitalist class and administering socialist production was unquestionably a giant step for-



We've got an attitude! -Bad Brains

## NEWS & VIEWS FROM (THE FORMER) SOVIETSKY SOYUZ

No.3  
1995

February

*Jahrbucher fur Psychoanalitik und Psychopathalogik  
der Russischer Radikalbewegungs*

xx

xx

### GENERAL COMPLAINTS

Greetings from the weak link of the worldwide revolutionary resistance!

In spite of the word "news" in the name of this bulletin it has always been views that dominated it. Just as any other publication from the former USSR, ours is very opinionated, not to say sectarian (we haven't got a sect). Since, due to our irregularity, we fail to deliver news that doesn't sink, we always make reviewing some tendencies in the anarchist scene here our main preoccupation. This time too, we offer you the following general complaints. (Well, there will be some news and events.)

The period since the previous issue of "News & Views" (August 1993) was characterized by the more and more evident withering away of the ideological federations (that is the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAS) and the Federation of Revolutionary Anarchists (FRAN). A third federation, the Association of Anarchist Movements (ADA) never was an ideological federation and due to its very informal character just can't die, because it was never actually so much alive). This fact however shouldn't bother you so much, since in places where there's enough will to continue anarchist activities, they are still carried off - on a more humane and non-sectarian basis. Unfortunately not everywhere it is so and anarchist groups that actually do something can be counted by numbers, plus, information exchange between different groups is in fact falling apart due to the fact that almost all the anarchist info-bulletins collapsed - the Petersburg-based "An-Press" which was published by libertarian capitalists is now defunct while its publishers finally did what they should have done long ago - joined some liberal party. "KAS-Contact" that was moved from Moscow to Tomsk 2 or 3 years ago finally collapsed, too, and was moved to Irkutsk where it was being published very irregularly due to lack of actual information and activities and technical problems. The only bulletin that carried some occasional news that was buried under heaps of gossip was Moscow IREAN's "Novy Nestor", that many people were forced to read since there was nothing else. (When I say the bulletin was filled with gossip and not

ward. However, a near century of technological change since De Leon's contribution casts severe doubts on the viability of the workplace as the "setting" for democratic forums for discussion and resolution of social issues. Accordingly, we reaffirm our broad position as expressed in the conclusion to our letter to Comrade Banks, to wit, that the socialist ballot should "make it clip and clear that what the nation would be asked to agree to would NOT! be devolution of its powers upon an industrial organization but delegation of industrial executive authority to an industrial organization responsible to the people through a political legislative assembly!"

Fraternally,

August 10, 1994

DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

(From p. 17)

Printing	47.93
Canadian Check	2.84
Bank charges	4.00
Total	\$ 243.42

BALANCE

November 1, 1995

\$ 43.88

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard  
for the DB

news, I present not my personal point of view, but the position of the editors of the bulletin, who from the very beginning looked at it as a joke. It's very ironic that they were delivering crap ahead of schedule (about 30 or 40 issues were published since the beginning of the last year), while they failed to publish their paper with the same regularity - although the latter only served the interests of anarchism in Russia since the paper was filled with RAF communiques and salivating about how IREAN loves them.)

### UKRAINIAN ANARCHISTS RE-GROUP (WHAT ELSE CAN THEY DO?)

In September-October last year some Ukrainian anarchists, tired of sectarian fights between KAS and FRAN and the absence of any workable anarchist network in Ukraine itself, decided to launch some kind of an all-Ukrainian federation. Although not all the Ukrainian anarchist groups participated in the gathering, the organizers (the Donetsk KAS group) got positive responses from various groups and activists from Lvov, Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, Nikolayev and some smaller towns. As a result of discussion at the conference they decided to put an end to sectarian debates (that were mainly 'imported' from Russia anyway) and quit all the federations they were part of - KAS, FRAN and ADA - and form the Confederation of Revolutionary Anarcho-Syndicalists (KRAS). (In fact the Donetsk KAS group proposed to create the Confederation of Revolutionary Anarcho-Syndicalists with a more traditional, IWA-type program at the last KAS gathering in Moscow, but this proposal was declined partly because of the lack of substantial reasoning behind it and some rather bureaucratic proposals for how this new federation should be run.) The new all-Ukrainian federation adopted a traditional anarcho-syndicalist program modelled on the one of the IWA. The latter seems to arouse a lot of comradesly interest for KRAS, although their position on the possibilities of affiliation with the IWA is different from that of the "Friends of the IWA" in Moscow - KRAS feels that the question of affiliation is still not on the agenda and it won't be in 1996 (the planned date of the next IWA Congress) due to the obvious weakness of anarcho-syndicalists in the former USSR and the absence of the "critical mass" for a syndicalist union. And it's true - none of the syndicalist groups in this country can be called a union, because of their miniscule size.

Although the anarchists of Donetsk region who were the motor behind the creation of KRAS are rather optimistic about the future of this organization, they obviously will face some serious problems - like the one they had last year when the officials warned them that they can't be an "anarchist federation" and publish a paper of this "federation" since it is not legally registered with the state. In case they will try to violate this, they were promised to be charged several hundred dollars worth of fines. This was one of the reasons why the second issue of their "Anarchy" paper wasn't published (the other reason was the primitive stage of capitalism in Ukraine and virtual inavailability of accessible printing places). Anyway, Ukrainian anarchists didn't abandon their desire to continue their publication. So far they launched a small internal discussion bulletin that aims at creating a discussion about the activities and principles of their organization.

### REVOLUTION OF THE SPECTACLE IN THE SOCIETY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The lack of appeal of 'radical' ideas and actions to the general population forces 'radicals' to think of new ways to seek popular support. The latest frenzy in the anarchist, communist and proto-fascist circles is the concept of being 'cool' and presenting your ideas and activities in the most spectacular way. The first to dive into this marketing strategy was Edward Limonov, a scandalously-famous Russian writer, founder of the spectacular-extremist National-Bolshevik Party. That Limonov, this re-incarnation of Malcolm MacLaren, decided to gain some popularity and money on the scandals surrounding his 'political' activities was quite predictable. What was hard to predict was the recent obsession of pretty traditional Young Communists (RKSM) with creating a new image of communism, which is to be marketed to the youth.

I doubt that they would ever have arrived at such a 'modern' concept, had they not been surrounded by some 'anarchists', who were in fact the main orchestrants of this frenzy. Already a while ago some people from IREAN headed to the Stalinist-lead "Student Defence" "trade union", where some monarchists and other miserable creatures were also involved. Anarchists wrote some 'cool' articles for the Young Communists' paper giving these bores some brand new ideas and images - some class war, some poorly-digested feminism, etc. "Student Defence" managed to organize some 'cool' protest in April last year with some occasional 'anti-capitalist actions', which were afterwards disproportionately blown up in their papers. After that the concept of 'spectacular revolution' was given final shape with statements like "to make a revolution today... it is enough to film the moment of rebellion and make a videoclip".

On January 17, 1995 Young Communists organized a "theoretico-practical conference on "New Revolutionary Communism", where they talked a lot about the need for a new ideology. Also they spoke a lot about the 'similarity' between the new left and new right and the necessity of acting together on some concrete issues. The reason for that was found in the 'numerous historical examples of Communists acting together with (left) fascists'. However, the reasons for such activities and their possible outcomes were not analyzed at all - it seemed that analysis of any kind is out of their reach. These tendencies were rather well articulated in the papers of IREAN, RKSM and the National-Bolshevik Party recently and thus it became possible for the Russian Section of the Last International and the Clandestine Committee for the Eradication of Professional Revolutionaries, Militants and their Sympathizers to go to considerable lengths denouncing all these stupidities of these self-proclaimed 'radicals'. The communique of these organizations called "A Good Cure for Obsolete Communism: An Appeal to the Victims of the Theoretico-practical Conference..." attacked the superficial claims about putting the spectacle to the service of revolution, the discovery of the similarity between the new left and the new right that we should somehow 'use' and the general stupidity of the above-mentioned tendencies.

### CHRONICLE

On December 7, 1994 about a dozen anarchists picketed the Indonesian embassy in Moscow, protesting against the continuing occupation of East Timor and the genocide of its population. A couple of articles about



the tragedy of East Timor was published in some (almost mainstream) paper, thus putting an end to the 20-year-old silence of Russian propaganda on this topic. Protesters handed a letter to the ambassador. Unfortunately this time the Moscow office of the BHP (a company extracting oil from East Timor in spite of occupation and genocide there) wasn't spraypainted and thrashed, but we'll sure do it next time.

Protests against the war in Chechnya sparked some life into the anarchist scene in Moscow. Anarchists participated in most of the demonstrations and pickets against the war. On December 12, which saw the biggest demonstration against the war (several thousand people, ranging from Communists to liberals and the Chechen community of Moscow), they tried to organize a small 'radical' march on the Defence Ministry together with some young Communists, Trots and radical liberals, but were stopped by the police. Several people were arrested later in the evening. On December 19 five activists of radical Democratic Union and anarchists painted the Defence Ministry with anti-war slogans and even 'bombed' it with fireworks. Some of them were reported to the police and arrested, but the court set them free without any fines. There was also some leafletting in Moscow metro (which is now filled with policemen and military, looking for "Chechen terrorists"), with a couple of people arrested and fined, and some spraypainting around the city. On January 30 some Moscow anarchists and radical liberals from the Democratic Union (DS) spraypainted 13 military call-up stations with anti-war and anti-imperialist slogans. They are also planning an active campaign against the military call-up this spring.

In Nizhny Novgorod (former Gorky) the local Anarchist Club, Rainbow Keepers and the local Green Party launched a campaign against the military institutions and the war in Chechnya. Local call-up stations were spraypainted with slogans like "Russia shouldn't be a gendarmet!", "Turn your arms against those who send you to kill" and "Here are the headquarters of the fascist army". This happened after the local authorities remained deaf to the demands of protesters who were organizing pickets. Well, if they still will be deaf, anarchists promised to go further than words.

Khabarovsk in the Far East is also bubbling - some anarchists make a radio show "While Mommy Watches Santa-Barbara", bringing some music and attitude to a young audience. Khabarovsk anarchists also launched a campaign against bus controllers, agitating for going without paying, collective obstructing of controllers and damaging some bus equipment. This campaign is an answer to another increase in the cost of public transport. Among the other activities of these joyful Far Easterners are continuing attempts to organize a rock club and a 'free university' (regular seminars and discussions on different topics).

In Tver, a city located in the middle of the road between Moscow and St. Petersburg, anarchists participate in a campaign against the construction of a superhighway between the two capitals. Construction of the superhighway, that will have a deep base is likely to destroy the natural underground water system of the region.

On February 11 activists from various anarchist, ecological and radical liberal groups held a discussion in Moscow. Originally, the topic of the discussion was rather broad - from the traditional ways of organizing in

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this country (and why they can't help us achieve anything) to the role of family in undermining broader communities to what we can do this spring. However, people who have gathered for the discussion preferred to discuss how it happened that radicalism lost even the tiny grounds that it had in the emerging social movements of the perestroika era (this discussion has been around for several years already), but didn't pay attention to what was really wrong with the existing forms of organizing (i.e. ideological groups). Anyway, since recently we witnessed the creation of some down-to-earth groups oriented on specific issues (mainly ecological), the radical movement is moving in the right direction. It's a pity that this is done in some unconscious fashion. As the discussion proceeded, issues of cooperation between different groups were discussed, namely around the anti-war and anti-draft campaign. It was more or less agreed to hold regular meetings and stop inter-personal and inter-group infights that were going on for several years. The groups that decided to participate in the future meetings included the Confederation of Anarcho-syndicalists, the Group of Radical Anarcho-syndicalists (GRAS), Rainbow Keepers (anarcho-ecological group), "A" Cultural Centre, "Cherepovets-95" ecological group, the Democratic Union (radical liberals), The Emma Goldman Dancing Brigade and some other activists that are active in other groups. (All of these groups are rather or very tiny.)

### DON'T EAT YOUR REVOLUTION! MAKE IT!

On November 7 all the Stalinists gathered on Oktyabrskaya Square in Moscow under the still-standing huge Lenin. Later they headed to Red Square, followed by some small groups of Trotskyists and even some anarchists who successfully created an illusion that "young people" were with them. While the latter's red-n-black banners and dull papers were surely unable to destroy the traditional way of celebrating the October revolution day, the assault came from where nobody expected it. As the demonstrators were going down their route they inevitably confronted a small group of some vocal revolutionaries who were standing on the side of the road under the banner of 'primitive communism' (made of fake red fur) who were fearlessly banging their big drum. As the crowd passed by them and tried to find out what they wanted to say, the atmosphere was getting more and more tense. "The Blind" (that is the name of an artistic group) announced that people who gathered at the demo had nothing to do with revolution, that they 'ate' their revolution and shitted it out, that the only thing they can do is ask the government for more money. Their poster announced "Proletarians of all lands, enough eating!" Instead of asking the government for money, The Blind announced, we should make another revolution and realise the real - primitive - communism. We should care less about material things and instead turn our attention to people around us. After the demo passed and the shouts "They are Jews, Zionists! Go back to Israel!" addressed to The Blind finally dissolved in the air, the 'primitive communists' headed back home and were stopped by police, who asked for their IDs. In spite of that, the affair ended peacefully.

### STRANGE FRUIT

On September 5 some Moscow anarchists and punks were trying to defend their 'property rights' to a basement that was for some time used

- Stuart Int. shorts



as a non-commercial club named first after the infamous sell-out Jerry Rubin and later after Ho Chi Min (due to the fact that the club was situated not far from a square named after him and a surreal monument to Ho). On New Year's Eve anarchists had a rather nice party there after which the club finally moved out - into nowhere. Since both the Jerry Rubin/Ho Chi Min Club and the "A" Club which was run by anarchists were homeless, they decided to join their forces. There are some reasons to believe that this union will bring about not only a cheap club where kids can hang out, but some constant place for radical meetings and activities. So far we found a basement that was given to us and now we are looking forward to cleaning it up and using it for meetings and some kind of infoshop and anarchist library.

### THE ABC OF LIBERTARIAN LENINISM (this will be a comix)

#### Characters:

*Male announcer* - a hero of some comix, more or less like a Superman

*Comrade Lenin* - the leader of proletarian revolution, founder of Leninism

*Male announcer:* Contrary to what is usually believed, Leninism too has strong libertarian potential. Unfortunately anarchists tend to disregard it while they point out that only on one occasion Lenin supposedly 'stole' their ideas when he wrote "State and Revolution". If we dig a little deeper, we will discover the unknown terrain of Leninism which is highlighted by aphorisms, not less poetic than those of Bakunin, Marx and the situationists. Please, comrade Lenin, give us just one example.

*Comrade Lenin (sitting on a chair, his arms on his knees, seems a little depressed, announces in mechanic voice):* You can't live in society and be free from society.

*Male announcer:* Brilliant, don't you think? For years and years philisters exploited just one of the numerous creative methods appropriated by Marx from Hegel, namely Marxist dialectical double-speak. Here we find another creative tool for building a critical social theory, the one that can be called critical reductionism. Let us now take the same phrase, but this time without the last word. Please, comrade Lenin!

*Comrade Lenin:* You can't live in society and be free...

*Male announcer:* Terrific! But we still haven't seen the rest of the method. Let's take out some more words. Please, comrade Lenin!

*Comrade Lenin:* You can't live in society and be...

*Male announcer:* Fantastic! Do you understand now what a great potential libertarians missed when they claimed Leninism to be inherently authoritarian? Contrary to this narrow opinion it is as critical as, say, young Marx... Let's see, what will happen if we take out some more.

*Comrade Lenin:* You can't live in society... You can't live... (*Clenching his fists, angrily.*) You can't, you can't, you can't!!!

*Male announcer:* Assistant, please! Can you take comrade Lenin and provide him with another dose of morphine? His authoritarian syndrome is back, we need to calm him down!..

### COMING SOON:

In the next issue of News&Views I hope to give some materials about:  
- anarcho-ecological groups in Russia and their activities, both in the recent years and the ones that they plan for the next summer  
- the activities and the current state of syndicalists groups and projects  
- "the wonderful world of ZAIBI", THE most interesting (anti)music (anti)group and some of its ideas

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Long live the ANC (Absolutely No Copyright)!

*Materials published above reflect only the personal opinion(s) of the author(s), but this doesn't mean they should be treated differently from the positions of the so-called federations.*

**If I can't be a graphomaniac once a year, I'm not part of your revolution! (Sorry for all the non-existent English words that I put into this bulletin.)**

These questions of the vocation of intellectuals can be approached along two dimensions: descriptive and normative. We can ask what the practice of intellectuals is, and what moral responsibilities attend these practices. I am often asked to talk about the topic and I always feel a certain discomfort, particularly when I am asked to talk about it in 14 minutes, as I was tonight. One reason is that the questions are just too abstract; they are too far removed from the choices and decisions that really matter, and in fact, raising the questions at this level of abstraction can very easily serve as just another one of those devices that we construct for ourselves, constantly, to protect ourselves from facing serious problems of moral responsibility, and that is a lot more comfortable and convenient than actually facing them. A second reason for some discomfort over the topic is that at an abstract level the answers, at least to the normative questions, seem entirely obvious.

Any person, naturally, bears responsibility for the predictable human consequences of his or her actions--that is more or less trivial--and here I include the failure to act (looking the other way). That is also a choice with human consequences, plainly--the lesson that should have been seared into our souls forever by the Nazi experience. In one important study of the Holocaust, Norman Cohen observes that "there was not very much popular enthusiasm for Hitler's genocide, even among Nazi party members. The leadership," he writes, "required no more than a mood of passive compliance: apathy, willingness to look the other way, concentrating on personal gain, and succumbing to the symbolism of national grandeur and power." That too is taking a stand and we rightly attribute moral responsibility to those who made that choice, and of course even more to those who chose to support, or to implement what Nazi ideologists called "the defensive action against the Jewish world criminals," many noted intellectuals among them. We see here, incidentally in the slogan, an instance of what we might call Orwell's First Law, namely "the state is always engaged in defense--no matter what the facts may be." We can add to it Orwell's Second Law that relates to our topic: "the vocation of the responsible intellectual is to establish and protect that sacred truth."

If we regard ourselves as moral agents, the general answers to the questions of moral responsibility at least are fairly obvious. When we turn to the intellectuals, other questions arise. We might first of all ask ourselves whether we really want to think of intellectual work as being the province of a special class of people. I think we should not, and to the extent that such work is so restricted, it is a social defect to be overcome. I presume that it is a fundamental human need to try to understand the world around us, to appreciate its cultural wealth, to contribute to it as we can, and no person should be deprived of these opportunities any more than a person should be deprived of food and shelter. But let's take the world as it is, with certain privileged sectors that do have the opportunity and the training and the resources to devote themselves to work of the mind. By virtue of these privileges, their responsibilities are plainly greater. The reason is that the range of their choices is greater and the consequences of making those choices are greater. So when children die of disease and malnutrition in El Salvador and Nicaragua, intellectuals at home have a greater responsibility than those who are not in a position either to promulgate or to expose the lies that mask our direct contribution to these ends and thus facilitate the crimes.

Now we all understand this perfectly well when we contemplate the crimes of official enemies. So for example, a few days ago there was a front-page story in the New York Times reporting that the Soviet press had published a Solzhenitzyn essay entitled "Live not by Lies" which was directed particularly to intellectuals. The message of his article was: "if you are too fearful to revolt against injustice or to speak the truth, at least do not repeat the lies." And there was also an implicit message here in the report of the story, a message of self-congratulation: no such lessons are needed for us.

Well let's look a bit more closely. Leading scholars assure us that the war in Vietnam was "undertaken in defense of a free people resisting communist aggression" --that is Robert Tucker in the featured lead article in the current issue of Foreign Affairs, referring to the United States attack against South Vietnam in the early 1960's to protect the client dictatorship that Washington had installed. And of course, no justification need be offered to back up such obvious truths, and none is. [John Lewis] Gaddis goes on, even blandly, to refer to what he calls the "Eisenhower



Administration's strategy of deterring aggression by threatening the use of nuclear weapons in Indochina in 1954 when French forces found themselves facing defeat at Dien-Bien-Phu at the hands of the Communist Viet-Minh," who were the aggressors, attacking our French ally defending Indochina against its own population.

Well, if you take a superficial look at the problem of the intellectual vocation, it might lead you to believe that there is a gap between the normative and the descriptive, maybe even a chasm. The normative injunction of course is Solzhenitzyn's ringing phrase "live not by lies," and the actual practice is to fabricate serviceable lies. When we look more closely, however, I think we find that the normative and the descriptive are not as far apart as one might imagine. Now, that is not because the practice is closer to standard rhetoric than I have indicated, but it is because the public rhetoric happens to be not the same at all as the private council.

There is a very strong tradition in the West holding that precisely in free societies where the state lacks means of coercion and people can express their beliefs and act upon them, precisely under those circumstances, intellectuals have a special responsibility; namely, to ensure that people think only the right thoughts. Now these concerns go back to the origins of modern democracy. At a rhetorical level of course, we are supposed to believe that a democratic society should provide the means for people to take some meaningful part in shaping public affairs, with free access to information and opinion, and opportunities to form their own ideas and to express them effectively--that is the public rhetoric. But it is worth recalling that since the origins of modern democracy, a contrary view has been widely held, probably dominantly held. One 17th century English historian, expressing a very common concern, wrote that the "Radical Democrats" who were trying to realize democratic values "were destroying the foundations of any government." He said that "ignorance and admiration arising from ignorance are the servants of civil devotion and obedience. The radical democrats have made the people so curious and arrogant that they will never find humility enough to submit to a civil rule." These same themes remain dominant to the present. Now this profound contempt and fear of democracy is revealed when modern liberal theorists explain that the job of the intellectuals is to create "necessary illusions" and "emotionally potent oversimplifications" as part of a process of "manufacture of consent" and they must do this if the "specialized class," who alone "understand the common interest," are to be able to rule undisturbed. I happen to be quoting Rhiemhold Neibluur and Walter Lippman, but the thoughts are conventional and by no means idiosyncratic.

One variant of these ideas appears in Leninist conceptions of a vanguard party; another variant is the standard doctrine of Western theorists that if the voice of the people is heard, it is necessary to ensure that the voice says the right things by devising means to control the public mind, and the vocation of the intellectuals, if they are serious and responsible, is to carry out these tasks.

The point is more general: in any society where power to make crucial decisions is concentrated, but formal mechanisms exist to permit public participation, it is necessary that these mechanisms somehow be emptied of content. One mechanism is to divert or mislead the public and to limit opportunities for free inquiry and expression--all for the common good, of course, as conceived by the powerful.

These are major themes of modern political history and we delude ourselves if we merely attend to the appealing rhetoric and do not penetrate to the reality that lies behind it. Attending to these realities, we obtain a proper standpoint for assessing the vocation of the intellectual as it is quite typically practiced. It is the exceptions to the pattern that are remarkable. And if we are willing to be honest with ourselves, which is typically not a very gratifying experience, we will also be able to judge the burden of responsibility and how it is borne, and most important, to take the choices that integrity demands.

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TURNING THE TIDE  
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## S.E.E. CHALLENGES THE BELL CURVE'S ASSUMPTIONS

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THE SOCIETY FOR ECONOMIC EQUALITY (SEE) does not deny the right of Calvin College, or any other cadre of "cognitive elites" (hereafter referred to as "cogs"), to present a forum for the opinions of Charles Murray. Murray's views are too controversial, however, to be given a privileged and unchallenged platform. *The Bell Curve* may be part of a deliberate attack on the most vulnerable segments of society. It is certainly an example of the kinds of policy currently being proposed to the ruling elite by their cogs.

1. We will leave it to the scientists to impugn Murray's use of tainted data and flawed methods. SEE rejects Murray's premise that the continuance of corporate capitalism is in the best interest of a majority of the people. All of Murray's arguments stem from this one unstated assumption: Capitalism delivers the greatest good to the greatest number.

We at SEE rather believe that the status quo menaces the human prospect. We blame the status quo for contributing significantly to the social and environmental problems we live with today—from domestic violence to war, from poverty to pollution—in the ruthless pursuit of control over the world's resources in defiance of principles of rational and humane economic development.

THE SOCIETY FOR ECONOMIC EQUALITY advocates social ownership of resources and worker/community partnership in controlling the means of production and distribution. The application of democratic principles to economic, social, and environmental problems only awaits the people's decision to abolish the status quo.

2. We at SEE despise Murray's conformist definitions of "success" and "intelligence."

IQ tests are designed to measure a narrow range of cognitive abilities, specifically linguistic and logic/mathematical aptitudes which make one employable within hierarchies of the status quo.

In the final analysis, a high IQ may relate to one's potential for success

as a corporate executive, a lawyer, a banker, a politician, a military tactician, but other factors figure heavily as well in achieving this kind of "success": connections, looks, mere ruthlessness.

THE SOCIETY FOR ECONOMIC EQUALITY argues that if intelligence does not include creativity—the ability to respond to beauty, to make people happy, to love, to live, to be generous—then it means nothing and will not contribute to the ultimate success and happiness of humankind.

3. We at SEE are deeply suspicious of a book that can discuss crime without mentioning white collar crime. We question Murray's motives in linking race to intelligence to economic status to crime.

We suspect that Murray argues in bad faith when he speculates that the depravity of the underclass may be somehow attributable to their racially determined subhuman intelligence while failing to mention the criminality of CEO's who knowingly sell exploding Pintos. He seems unaware or troubled that corporate interests are protected by political and military cogs who organize and order bombings from Baghdad to Hanoi. CIA cogs direct the ongoing terror and genocide in Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, Panama, Haiti, etc, and conduct a significant portion of the world's narcotics traffic. Murray, meanwhile, is dismayed to see the poor in an increasingly hopeless situation resorting to illegal activities and striking out mostly at other poor people! This seems disingenuous. Furthermore, to suggest that the poor owe their lesser or loser status to racial inferiority and low intelligence merely adds insult to the injuries sustained by people of color (and to a lesser extent, the white working class) through hundreds of years of capitalist colonialism.

---

Get involved: Attend a viewing of Charles Murray's Calvin College appearance on Saturday, Feb. 11, 1995 at 2 PM in Room 203 of the GVV Eberhard Center, 301W Fulton. Following the video Richmond Willey (of SEE) and James Bradley (of Calvin College's mathematics department) among others will take part in a panel discussion. *The public is welcome!*

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For copies of "Frauds at the Heart of *The Bell Curve*," and "*The Wall Street Journal's Bell Curve* Promo Play," send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: SEE, PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids MI 49501

After several years Red Lion Press in Montreal has reactivated itself. The DB received review copies of four new publications, all by Larry Gambone and all available from AK Distribution, P.O. Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140. *Laughter Is Bourgeois: The Roots of Political Correctness* (11 pages, 8 1/2 by 5 1/2, \$1.60) traces political correctness, PC, back to authoritarian strands in the workers movement dating back even before Lenin and the Bolsheviks to the positivist ideas of "scientific" socialism that informed socialist thinking in the nineteenth century. Gambone argues that it was this concept that gave rise to the idea of a correct "political line" we associate with Marxist-Leninists. He then goes on to trace its influence in the New Left and in the contemporary leftwing. He sees it as a brake on organizing for socialism and suggests ways of combatting it.

*Revolution & Reformism: The Split Between "Moderates" and "Revolutionaries" in French Anarcho-Syndicalism*, (17 pages, \$2) illustrates Gambone's familiarity with the history of the various strands of the libertarian socialist, or impossibilist, movement, in this case the history of the French syndicalist movement. The Confederation General du Travail or CGT was born in 1895 and grew rapidly for a decade or so. It differed from the American IWW in that it possessed a group of theorists whose writings influenced labor and socialist thinkers worldwide at a time when reformism and compromise were on the rise in both the social democracy and its labor union movement. Among these were Daniel De Leon and radical unionists like Trautmann and others who adapted syndicalism to U.S. conditions and organized the IWW. Readers will find parallels with IWW history, including factions that sought to transform it into a pure and simple union, takeover attempts by the Communist Party, and switches in tactics as direct action proved useless in many situations. It covers the period to 1936 when the communists finally took it over.

In *Syndicalism in Myth and Reality* (14 pages, \$2) Gambone corrects many misconceptions about the strength and influence of anarcho-syndicalism. Most readers familiar with the IWW, for example, assume as I did that its heyday ended with the repression it experienced during WWI and the criminal syndicalism laws that followed. The membership tables Gambone has published tell a different story. IWW membership in 1912 was 18,400, and that of the Canadian IWW was 9000. In 1922, four years after the war, the IWW had 40,000 members while the Canadian syndicalist One Big Union (OBU) had 41,000 members. Syndicalism had spread internationally too. There was a Chilean IWW with 20,000 members and syndicalist unions in Argentina, France--the CGT with 600,000 members, Spain, Germany, Holland, Mexico, Portugal and Uruguay. In 1939 the IWW still had a membership of 20,000, but syndicalism was clearly in decline around the world. Gambone sees the cause as the destructive role played by the Communist parties and an unfortunate tendency toward factionalism and sectarianism within the movement. He gives the example of syndicalists in Mexico City, who refused to support the approaching revolutionary Zapatista forces because the peasants carried religious banners. Gambone sees current trends that may revive revolutionary unionism, among them the movement on the part of capital to leave more of management to the workers. The pamphlet has excellent notes and bibliography.

*The Impossibilists* (38 pages, 8 1/2 by 11, \$4) consists of "selections from the press of the Socialist Party of Canada and the One Big Union 1906-1938" preceded by a five page historical sketch of the SPC OBU. For readers like me who are interested, it offers the first information I have seen on the



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origins of the peculiarly Canadian experiment in syndicalism, the OBU, and its connection with the Socialist Party of Canada. Gambone describes some of his selections as follows:

The articles presented here give the range of opinions and interests of the Impossibleists. *The Next Act In World Drama* foretells how society was evolving into state capitalism, and how the socialist movement could well be pushed aside by its statist simulacra. (as it was) *A Reply to John Alexander and Nationalization of Industry* are harsh rejections of state ownership and control of industry. *The Fallacy of Nationalization and Socialism* and the CCF continue the theme at a much later date. *What We Want*, *Emiliano Zapata* and *A Business Without A Boss* explain what the Impossibleists would like to see in place of "industrial feudalism" and state capitalist "socialism".

The development of the OBU movement is clearly foreshadowed in *Future Activity of Trade Unions* and the process that gave rise to revolutionary syndicalism is spelled out in *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism*. The differences between revolutionary syndicalism and business unionism are explained in *What Is The OBU?* and discussed further in *Will Industrial Unionism Suffice? The Closed Shop and Industrial Liberty* will surprise many present day trade unionists with its firm rejection of the closed shop and dues check-off.

Rather than the mechanical materialism of "dialect" some members of the SPC and OBU preferred the libertarian philosophy of Joseph Dietzgen, whose thought in contemporary parlance would be called "holistic". *Proletarian Logic*, *Centenary of Joseph Dietzgen*, and *Dietzgen and Relativity* discuss the relevance of the "proletarian philosopher", who like most Impossibleists, was a self-educated workingman.

Bolshevism is criticized for its authoritarianism and dictatorship in any form is specifically rejected in *Is It The Dictatorship Of the Proletariat?* While the October Revolution is supported in *On Copying The Bolsheviks*, Communist tactics are deemed unworthy of export. *Russia Never Was Socialist* exposes the state capitalist nature of the USSR. Trotsky is defended against Stalin, while Leninism is also clearly rejected, in *The Eclipse of Trotsky*.



✓Ken T/SOR/4/1/16

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This seems to be our Einstein issue. A history of his "Why Socialism?" as well as the two articles that accompany it, the SLP leaflet "Scientist Einstein Goes Unscientific on Socialism" and Einstein's essay "Living Philosophies," appears on page 3. Next Adam Buick adds to the DB74 critique of Internationalism's polemic on the DeLeonist stand on capitalist democracy and South Africa as viewed by the New Unionist. And Kenneth Ferris reviews Margaret Randall's book about her second trip to Nicaragua to interview women on the effects on them of the replacement of state capitalism with private capitalism.

Kamunist Kranti in Faridabad India, publishes a weekly Hindi language workers' paper, the *Faridabad Majdoor Samachar*. On occasion KK sends us English language texts on various matters, the most

(to p. 14)

## ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the "left," not between Anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism's statist leftwing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, communist anarchists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, and left communists. The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism's wage, market, and money system as well as capitalist politics and unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its market and statist phases.

In the DB the often antagonistic groups that make up this sector can debate and discuss the issues that divide them, gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities and begin a process, we hope, of at least limited cooperation.

The pages of the DB are open to anyone in this political sector, the only limitation being that submissions be typewritten, single-spaced, and copier ready. We do no editing here. As to content, we assume that submissions will be relevant to the purpose of the DB and will avoid personal attacks.

### Subscription Information

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## WHY SOCIALISM? By Albert Einstein

### Introductory Note

Albert Einstein wrote "Why Socialism?" as the Cold War was beginning to develop. It appeared in the first issue (May 1949) of *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine*, published by Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, who identified socialism with the USSR and the emerging Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe.

The reader gathers that Einstein was not clear in his mind about the exact form a new society would take, but the following passage and indeed the last two paragraphs of his essay suggest his reservations about the "actually existing socialism" of the USSR: "...a planned economy is not yet socialism. A planned economy as such may be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the individual." Also worthy of note are his clear exposition in Marxist terms of the way capitalism operates and his plea for a humane socialism. "Market socialists" take note.

In 1950 *Monthly Review* published the essay as its first pamphlet, and it was reprinted, also in 1950, as the first in a collection of Einstein's articles and speeches, *Essays in Humanism*, by Philosophical Library. I have no further information about its publishing history except that the Florida group, Action Network for Social Justice (ANSJ), published an abridged version in 1994, the cover of which is used in the pamphlet version of the essay (see below).

The SLP's "Scientist Einstein Goes Unscientific on Socialism" was written by Stephen Emery and first published as an "open letter" to Einstein in the *Weekly People* and then distributed in thousands of copies as the leaflet you see reproduced here. No record exists of Einstein's having taken notice of the open letter. Emery remained an active member of the SLP until his death earlier this year.

(to p. 7)

## WHY SOCIALISM?

IS IT ADVISABLE for one who is not an expert on economic and social issues to express views on the subject of socialism? I believe for a number of reasons that it is.

Let us first consider the question from the point of view of scientific knowledge. It might appear that there are no essential methodological differences between astronomy and economics: scientists in both fields attempt to discover laws of general acceptability for a circumscribed group of phenomena in order to make the interconnection of these phenomena as clearly understandable as possible. But in reality such methodological differences do exist. The discovery of general laws in the field of economics is made difficult by the circumstance that observed economic phenomena are often affected by many factors which are very hard to evaluate separately. In addition, the experience which has accumulated since the beginning of the so-called civilized period of human history has—as is well known—been largely influenced and limited by causes which are by no means exclusively economic in nature. For example, most of the major states of history owed their existence to conquest. The conquering peoples established themselves, legally and economically, as the privileged class of the conquered country. They seized for themselves a monopoly of the land ownership and appointed a priesthood from among their own ranks. The priests, in control of education, made the class division of society into a permanent institution and created a system of values by which the people were thenceforth, to a large extent unconsciously, guided in their social behavior.

But historic tradition is, so to speak, of yesterday;



nowhere have we really overcome what Thorstein Veblen called "the predatory phase" of human development. The observable economic facts belong to that phase and even such laws as we can derive from them are not applicable to other phases. Since the real purpose of socialism is precisely to overcome and advance beyond the predatory phase of human development, economic science in its present state can throw little light on the socialist society of the future.

Second, socialism is directed towards a social-ethical end. Science, however, cannot create ends and, even less, instill them in human beings; science, at most, can supply the means by which to attain certain ends. But the ends themselves are conceived by personalities with lofty ethical ideals and—if these ends are not stillborn, but vital and vigorous—are adopted and carried forward by those many human beings who, half unconsciously, determine the slow evolution of society.

For these reasons, we should be on our guard not to overestimate science and scientific methods when it is a question of human problems; and we should not assume that experts are the only ones who have a right to express themselves on questions affecting the organization of society.

Innumerable voices have been asserting for some time now that human society is passing through a crisis, that its stability has been gravely shattered. It is characteristic of such a situation that individuals feel indifferent or even hostile toward the group, small or large, to which they belong. In order to illustrate my meaning, let me record here a personal experience. I recently discussed with an intelligent and well-disposed man the threat of another war, which in my opinion would seriously endanger the existence of mankind, and I remarked that only a supranational organization would offer protection from that danger. Thereupon my visitor, very calmly and coolly, said to me: "Why are you so deeply opposed to the disappearance of the human race?"

I am sure that as little as a century ago no one would have so lightly made a statement of this kind. It is the

statement of a man who has striven in vain to attain an equilibrium within himself and has more or less lost hope of succeeding. It is the expression of a painful solitude and isolation from which so many people are suffering in these days. What is the cause? Is there a way out?

It is easy to raise such questions, but difficult to answer them with any degree of assurance. I must try, however, as best I can, although I am very conscious of the fact that our feelings and strivings are often contradictory and obscure and that they cannot be expressed in easy and simple formulas.

Man is, at one and the same time, a solitary being and a social being. As a solitary being, he attempts to protect his own existence and that of those who are closest to him, to satisfy his personal desires, and to develop his innate abilities. As a social being, he seeks to gain the recognition and affection of his fellow human beings, to share in their pleasures, to comfort them in their sorrows, and to improve their conditions of life. Only the existence of these varied, frequently conflicting, strivings accounts for the special character of a man, and their specific combination determines the extent to which an individual can achieve an inner equilibrium and can contribute to the well-being of society. It is quite possible that the relative strength of these two drives is, in the main, fixed by inheritance. But the personality that finally emerges is largely formed by the environment in which a man happens to find himself during his development, by the structure of the society in which he grows up, by the tradition of that society, and by its appraisal of particular types of behavior. The abstract concept "society" means to the individual human being the sum total of his direct and indirect relations to his contemporaries and to all the people of earlier generations. The individual is able to think, feel, strive, and work by himself; but he depends so much upon society—in his physical, intellectual, and emotional existence—that it is impossible to think of him, or to understand him, outside the framework of society. It is

"society" which provides man with food, clothing, a home, the tools of work, language, the forms of thought, and most of the content of thought; his life is made possible through the labor and the accomplishments of the many millions past and present who are all hidden behind the small word "society."

It is evident, therefore, that the dependence of the individual upon society is a fact of nature which cannot be abolished—just as in the case of ants and bees. However, while the whole life process of ants and bees is fixed down to the smallest detail by rigid, hereditary instincts, the social pattern and interrelationships of human beings are very variable and susceptible to change. Memory, the capacity to make new combinations, the gift of oral communication have made possible developments among human beings which are not dictated by biological necessities. Such developments manifest themselves in traditions, institutions, and organizations; in literature; in scientific and engineering accomplishments; in works of art. This explains how it happens that, in a certain sense, man can influence his life through his own conduct, and that in this process conscious thinking and wanting can play a part.

Man acquires at birth, through heredity, a biological constitution which we must consider fixed and unalterable, including the natural urges which are characteristic of the human species. In addition, during his lifetime, he acquires a cultural constitution which he adopts from society through communication and through many other types of influences. It is this cultural constitution which, with the passage of time, is subject to change and which determines to a very large extent the relationship between the individual and society. Modern anthropology has taught us, through comparative investigation of so-called primitive cultures, that the social behavior of human beings may differ greatly, depending upon prevailing cultural patterns and the types of organization which predominate in society. It is on this that those who are striving to improve the lot of man may ground their hopes: human beings are *not* condemned, because

of their biological constitution, to annihilate each other or to be at the mercy of a cruel, self-inflicted fate.

If we ask ourselves how the structure of society and the cultural attitude of man should be changed in order to make human life as satisfying as possible, we should constantly be conscious of the fact that there are certain conditions which we are unable to modify. As mentioned before, the biological nature of man is, for all practical purposes, not subject to change. Furthermore, technological and demographic developments of the last few centuries have created conditions which are here to stay. In relatively densely settled populations with the goods which are indispensable to their continued existence, an extreme division of labor and a highly-centralized productive apparatus are absolutely necessary. The time—which, looking back, seems so idyllic—is gone forever when individuals or relatively small groups could be completely self-sufficient. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that mankind constitutes even now a planetary community of production and consumption.

I have now reached the point where I may indicate briefly what to me constitutes the essence of the crisis of our time. It concerns the relationship of the individual to society. The individual has become more conscious than ever of his dependence upon society. But he does not experience this dependence as a positive asset, as an organic tie, as a protective force, but rather as a threat to his natural rights, or even to his economic existence. Moreover, his position in society is such that the egotistical drives of his make-up are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate. All human beings, whatever their position in society, are suffering from this process of deterioration. Unknowingly prisoners of their own egotism, they feel insecure, lonely, and deprived of the naive, simple, and unsophisticated enjoyment of life. Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society.

The economic anarchy of capitalist society as it exists



today is, in my opinion, the real source of the evil. We see before us a huge community of producers the members of which are unceasingly striving to deprive each other of the fruits of their collective labor—not by force, but on the whole in faithful compliance with legally established rules. In this respect, it is important to realize that the means of production—that is to say, the entire productive capacity that is needed for producing consumer goods as well as additional capital goods—may legally be, and for the most part are, the private property of individuals.

For the sake of simplicity, in the discussion that follows I shall call “workers” all those who do not share in the ownership of the means of production—although this does not quite correspond to the customary use of the term. The owner of the means of production is in a position to purchase the labor power of the worker. By using the means of production, the worker produces new goods which become the property of the capitalist. The essential point about this process is the relation between what the worker produces and what he is paid, both measured in terms of real value. Insofar as the labor contract is “free,” what the worker receives is determined not by the real value of the goods he produces, but by his minimum needs and by the capitalists’ requirements for labor power in relation to the number of workers competing for jobs. It is important to understand that even in theory the payment of the worker is not determined by the value of his product.

Private capital tends to become concentrated in few hands, partly because of competition among the capitalists, and partly because technological development and the increasing division of labor encourage the formation of larger units of production at the expense of the smaller ones. The result of these developments is an oligarchy of private capital the enormous power of which cannot be effectively checked even by a democratically organized political society. This is true since the members of legislative bodies are selected by political parties, largely financed or otherwise influenced by private capi-

talists who, for all practical purposes, separate the electorate from the legislature. The consequence is that the representatives of the people do not in fact sufficiently protect the interests of the underprivileged sections of the population. Moreover, under existing conditions, private capitalists inevitably control, directly or indirectly, the main sources of information (press, radio, education). It is thus extremely difficult, and indeed in most cases quite impossible, for the individual citizen to come to objective conclusions and to make intelligent use of his political rights.

The situation prevailing in an economy based on the private ownership of capital is thus characterized by two main principles: first, means of production (capital) are privately owned and the owners dispose of them as they see fit; second, the labor contract is free. Of course, there is no such thing as a *pure* capitalist society in this sense. In particular, it should be noted that the workers, through long and bitter political struggles, have succeeded in securing a somewhat improved form of the “free labor contract” for certain categories of workers. But taken as a whole, the present day economy does not differ much from “pure” capitalism.

Production is carried on for profit, not for use. There is no provision that all those able and willing to work will always be in a position to find employment; an “army of unemployed” almost always exists. The worker is constantly in fear of losing his job. Since unemployed and poorly paid workers do not provide a profitable market, the production of consumers’ goods is restricted, and great hardship is the consequence. Technological progress frequently results in more unemployment rather than in an easing of the burden of work for all. The profit motive, in conjunction with competition among capitalists, is responsible for an instability in the accumulation and utilization of capital which leads to increasingly severe depressions. Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labor, and to that crippling of the social consciousness of individuals which I mentioned before.



This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the student, who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a preparation for his future career.

I am convinced there is only *one* way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be oriented toward social goals. In such an economy, the means of production are owned by society itself and are utilized in a planned fashion. A planned economy, which adjusts production to the needs of the community, would distribute the work to be done among all those able to work and would guarantee a livelihood to every man, woman, and child. The education of the individual, in addition to promoting his own innate abilities, would attempt to develop in him a sense of responsibility for his fellow men in place of the glorification of power and success in our present society.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that a planned economy is not yet socialism. A planned economy as such may be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the individual. The achievement of socialism requires the solution of some extremely difficult socio-political problems: how is it possible, in view of the far-reaching centralization of political and economic power, to prevent bureaucracy from becoming all-powerful and overweening? How can the rights of the individual be protected and therewith a democratic counterweight to the power of bureaucracy be assured?

(from p. 3)

Also included is an earlier essay by Einstein published in 1931. the pacifist humanism of his thinking at that time contrasts sharply with his anti-capitalism witnessing the human misery of the depression of the Thirties and the horrors of WWII.

Readers interested in obtaining the essay full size in pamphlet form can send DB a dollar for two copies.

--fg

(from p. 21)

ago, with its untold human suffering. We are in for a struggle unlike anything any of us have ever seen before, as the Bell-Atlantic employees testify, and we must use any and all means at our disposal. It's time we came to our collective senses, while there is still time. We must insist that progress without people is not progress. At the very least, as a modest beginning, we pull the public plug on the information highway.

# SCIENTIST EINSTEIN Goes Unscientific on SOCIALISM



The Socialist Labor Party, being the only Party of Socialism in America (founded in 1890), has no affiliation or association with the so-called Socialist party, Communist party, American Labor party, nor with any other party or group in this country or abroad.

[The following open letter to Dr. Albert Einstein was published in the WEEKLY PEOPLE, December 31, 1949. It was inspired by an article by the great physicist that was favorable to Socialism, but that expressed apprehension of an "overweening" bureaucracy. Stephen Emery, who answers Dr. Einstein, was the Socialist Labor Party's candidate for Vice President of the United States in 1948.]

December 16, 1949  
Dr. Albert Einstein,  
Institute for Advanced Study,  
Princeton, New Jersey.

Dear Doctor Einstein:

I have read with interest your article, "Why Socialism?" and, in the main, warmly approve the views you express there. It is my conviction, too, that the grave evils disfiguring this age can be eliminated only by the establishment of a Socialist economy.

To my mind, you do not exaggerate when you state that "Clarity about the aims and problems of Socialism is of the greatest significance in our age of transition." For certainly the penalty for failure on the part of at least a substantial number of our contemporaries to achieve this clarity must be a social disaster.

## STALINISTS AND CAPITALISTS SOW CONFUSION

Accordingly, it is the solemn duty of every earnest individual to strive for a clear understanding of Socialism himself and to aid others to reach it. The more so because the enemies of Socialism, Stalinist and capitalist alike, are doing their utmost to sow confusion on this crucial subject.

In this spirit I venture to deal with some questions which you pose at the close of your article.

The questions referred to indicate sincere and penetrating thought. However, they also indicate that you, Dr. Einstein, have not escaped being infected by one of the most vicious of the many fallacies regarding Socialism in circulation today; the erroneous notion that the governing agency of Socialist society will be political in character—i.e., a State; and the corollary notion that control of Socialist industry will be vested in a bureaucracy.

## EINSTEIN FEARS "SOCIALIST" BUREAUCRACY

Can one infer other than this when you ask: "How is it possible, in view of the far-reaching centralization of political and economic power, to prevent bureaucracy from becoming all powerful and overweening? How can the rights of the individual be protected and therewith a democratic counterweight to the power of bureaucracy be assured?"

Let me say in immediate reply to these questions that, given the grotesque caricature of Socialism which they imply, there would be not the slightest possibility of avoiding a bureaucratic tyranny.

Such a monstrosity might be a "planned economy," yes. But, as you yourself warn, "it is necessary to remember that a planned economy is not yet Socialism. A planned economy as such may be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the individual."

## WHAT KIND OF "PLANNED ECONOMY"?

Now where lies the critical distinction between the type of "planned economy" which totally en-



slaves a nation and a Socialist economy, that will insure freedom and well-being to everyone? Above all, it lies in the realm of government!

To seek to realize Socialism through the instrumentality of the existing machinery of government, to seek to adapt the present political mechanism to the requirements of Socialist society by even the most radical reforms conceivable—must fatedly result in a totalitarian “planned economy.” Events in Stalin’s Russia (as well as elsewhere) speak volumes on this head.

#### WHAT IS THE “STATE”?

Why is this so? Why cannot the State be bent to Socialist purposes? For the fundamental reason that the political form of government was not designed to serve as the instrument of the popular will. On the contrary, the origin of the political State traces to the desire and the need of a rising oligarchy to destroy the ancient influence of the people in communal affairs. And down through the centuries of what you aptly term “the predatory phase of human development”—meaning the period since the advent of so-called civilization, private property and class rule—the political State has, by a process of adaptation, continued unflinchingly to perform its essential function, that of being the organized power through which the majority has been oppressed and a minority’s self-interest imposed as the social law. Such has been its role, such will be its role as long as it survives, for such is its central principle.

So much for the State. Socialist

ist society can make no more use of it than of the slave-master’s whip. There remains, however, the larger question still unanswered: What is to be the structure of government under Socialism?

#### DE LEON’S CONCEPT OF INDUSTRIAL GOVERNMENT

This problem was solved over forty years ago by the American Socialist, Daniel De Leon, who formulated the ground plan for an industrial representative government, an economic administration democratically constituted by all those engaged in the industries and vocations on which our collective welfare depends.

De Leon’s plan is no utopian scheme, no fanciful creation of the mere intellect. This man, of whom Lenin once said that his conception of an industrial democratic government was the single addition to Marxian Socialist science since the death of Marx, was as adamant a realist, as insistent that theory must rest on all the obtainable facts, as you are, Doctor, in your chosen field. And his projection of the proper nature and shape of a Socialist government is the crowning fruit of these traits.

I will not attempt to develop De Leon’s magnificent idea at length here since I am addressing one of the world’s renowned scholars, a person fully aware that any question as profound as this under discussion deserves more than cursory attention, deserves indeed the most thorough investigation.

In lieu of extensive treatment, therefore, I earnestly recommend that you study De Leon’s works, and with them the scholarly “An-

cient Society” of Lewis Henry Morgan, a masterwork which laid the basis for modern anthropology and deeply influenced De Leon and other eminent Socialist thinkers.

And I close with the fervent hope that “clarity about the aims and problems of Socialism” shall

soon become so universal among our fellow mortals that the human family will avert the catastrophe looming before us and enter upon a splendid era of fraternity, tranquility and freedom.

Yours sincerely,  
STEPHEN EMERY.

## AIMS OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY wants to abolish poverty, insecurity, unemployment and war; we do not want totalitarianism in any form, be it Stalinist, Nazi or a domestic adaptation of either of these European models:

WE WANT A WORLD freed of the war-breeding struggle for capitalist markets, a world in which goods are produced for the use of the producers and not for sale with a view to profit. We want a world in which machinery will become a blessing to multiply our output and give to the producers leisure in which to study, travel and enjoy the product of our labor. We want to live full lives relieved forever of want and fear of want.

ORGANIZED POLITICALLY, the workers possess the right to agitate freely for the overthrow of the capitalist system that has brought society to its present pass, and the establishment in its place of the Socialist Cooperative Commonwealth. ORGANIZED ECONOMICALLY into Socialist Industrial Unions, they possess the might to enforce the right that their Socialist ballot proclaims.

SOCIALISM MEANS the abolition of the Political State with its horde of politicians and establishing of the ownership and operation by the workers of the means of wealth production—the land, the factories, the railroads, etc. It means the retention by the useful producers of the full social value of their labor. It means an end to exploitation and the inauguration of true democracy, the establishment of industrial democracy through a Socialist Industrial Union Administration over things as opposed to the capitalist State rule over men.

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY, 61 Cliff Street, New York 8, N.Y.  
I am interested in Socialism. Without obligation, please send me information and free literature, including sample copy of the WEEKLY PEOPLE, official organ of the Socialist Labor Party, established in 1891.

Name .....

Address .....

(S.E.G.U.o.S.)

(May be pasted on back of postcard)



LIVING PHILOSOPHIES

Albert Einstein

Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose.

From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that man is here for the sake of other men--above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow-men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received. My peace of mind is often troubled by the depressing sense that I have borrowed too heavily from the work of other men.

I do not believe we can have any freedom at all in the philosophical sense, for we act not only under external compulsion but also by inner necessity. Schopenhauer's saying--"A man can surely do what he wills to do, but he cannot determine what he wills"--impressed itself upon me in youth and has always consoled me when I have witnessed or suffered life's hardships. This conviction is a perpetual breeder of tolerance, for it does not allow us to take ourselves or others too seriously; it makes rather for a sense of humor.

To ponder interminably over the reason for one's own existence or the meaning of life in general seems to me, from an objective point of view, to be sheer folly. And yet everyone holds certain ideals by which he guides his aspiration and his judgment. The ideals which have always shone before me and filled me with the joy of living are goodness, beauty, and truth. To make a goal of comfort or happiness has never appealed to me; a system of ethics built on this basis would be sufficient only for a herd of cattle.

Without the sense of collaborating with like-minded beings in the pursuit of the ever unattainable in art and scientific research, my life would have been empty. Ever since childhood I have scorned the commonplace limits so often set upon human ambition. Possessions, outward success, publicity, luxury--to me these have always been contemptible. I believe that a simple and unassuming manner of life is best for everyone, best both for the body and the mind.

My passionate interest in social justice and social responsibility has always stood in curious contrast to a marked lack of desire for direct association with men and women. I am a horse for single harness, not cut out for tandem or team work. I have never belonged wholeheartedly to country or state, to my circle of friends, or even to my own family. These ties have always been accompanied by a vague aloofness, and the wish to withdraw into myself increases with the years.

Such isolation is sometimes bitter, but I do not regret being cut off from the understanding and sympathy of other men. I lose something by it, to be sure, but I am compensated for it in being rendered independent of the customs, opinions, and prejudices of others, and am not tempted to rest my peace of mind upon such shifting foundations.

My political ideal is democracy. Everyone should be respected as an individual, but no one idolized. It is an irony of fate that I should have been showered with so much un-called-for and unmerited admiration and esteem. Perhaps this adulation springs from the unfulfilled wish of the multitude to comprehend the few ideas which I, with my weak powers, have advanced.

Full well do I know that in order to attain any definite goal it is imperative that *one* person should do the thinking and commanding and carry most of the responsibility. But those who are led should not be driven, and they should be allowed to choose their leader. It seems

to me that the distinctions separating the social classes are false; in the last analysis they rest on force. I am convinced that degeneracy follows every autocratic system of violence, for violence inevitably attracts moral inferiors. Time has proved that illustrious tyrants are succeeded by scoundrels.

For this reason I have always been passionately opposed to such regimes as exist in Russia and Italy today. The thing which has discredited the European forms of democracy is not the basic theory of democracy itself, which some say is at fault, but the instability of our political leadership, as well as the impersonal character of party alignments.

I believe that those in the United States have hit upon the right idea. A President is chosen for a reasonable length of time and enough power is given him to acquit himself properly of his responsibilities. In the German Government, on the other hand, I like the state's more extensive care of the individual when he is ill or unemployed. What is truly valuable in our bustle of life is not the nation, I should say, but the creative and impressive individuality, the personality--he who produces the noble and sublime while the common herd remains dull in thought and insensible in feeling.

This subject brings me to that vilest offspring of the herd mind--the odious militia. The man who enjoys marching in line and file to the strains of music falls below my contempt; he received his great brain by mistake--the spinal cord would have been amply sufficient. This heroism at command, this senseless violence, this accursed bombast of patriotism--how intensely I despise them! War is low and despicable, and I had rather be smitten to shreds than participate in such doings.

Such a stain on humanity should be erased without delay. I think well enough of human nature to believe that it would have been wiped out long ago had not the common sense of nations been systematically corrupted through school and press for business and political reasons.

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms--this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.

I cannot imagine a God who rewards and punishes the objects of his creation, whose purposes are modeled after our own--a God, in short, who is but a reflection of human frailty. Neither can I believe that the individual survives the death of his body, although feeble souls harbor such thoughts through fear or ridiculous egotism. It is enough for me to contemplate the mystery of conscious life perpetuating itself through all eternity, to reflect upon the marvelous structure of the universe which we can dimly perceive, and to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the intelligence manifested in nature.

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Dear Frank

I'd like to add a point to your excellent criticism of the ICC (DB 74).

In the article reproduced from Internationalism in DB73 De Leon is criticised for his stance that a socialist party should not advocate reforms of capitalism. According to the ICC, socialists before 1914 should have advocated reforms:

"Whereas other revolutionaries in the late 19th and early 20th century correctly supported the struggle for reforms, De Leon did not support that struggle. Instead he denounced the struggle for reforms as synonymous with the counter-revolutionary practice of reformism" (DB73, page 6).

In other words, the ICC support mainstream pre-WWI Social Democracy which made a distinction between a maximum programme (socialism) and a minimum programme (reforms of capitalism). In practice all they concentrated on was the latter, with the result that they ended up as purely reformist organisations. And the ICC say they were right and the revolutionaries who identified the mistake that mainstream Social Democracy made were wrong!

This support for mainstream Social Democracy and its "counter-revolutionary practice of reformism" is made even more explicit in a criticism of the SPGB and Subversion in the latest issue of the ICC's UK publication World Revolution (No 189):

"There are a few tiny libertarian groups which denounce the Labour Party as anti-working class. But for them the Labour Party, like Social Democracy as a whole, was never proletarian, even when before 1914 it could be a vehicle for workers interests".

The pre-WWI Labour Party "a vehicle for workers' interests"! It didn't even claim to be socialist, let alone Marxist or an advocate of class struggle and its MPs were elected in shady electoral deals with the Liberal Party. What next? That workers should have voted Liberal in the 19th century because this party offered them some reforms which capitalism could afford?

Yours for Socialism

*Adam Buick*

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Review of Sandino's Daughters Revisited, by Margaret Randall, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994. ISBN#0-8135-2024 /0-8135-2025-8(pbk.)

The history of men who steal the ideas of women is long and discouraging. The history of white Europeans who have plundered the ideas of the colonial "Other" is long and discouraging. [Yearning: 123-134] It is in this context that I am writing a review of a book by a North American woman about Nicaragua. It is my hope not to colonize *Sandino's Daughters Revisited* or the women who speak in it.

Margaret Randall refuses to take the attention and rewards of questioning, recording, transcribing and photographing the various FSLN Nicaraguan women of the post-Sandinista *Sandino's Daughters Revisited* [SDR]. As a North American she writes, "For example, people (especially women) have written to me, or come to me, and told me how [the oral histories] *Cuban Women Now* and *Sandino's Daughters* [SDR's 1981 antecedent, from here on referred to as *SD*] opened to them a whole new way of seeing the world [. . .] I do not want to take the credit. It is Cuban and Nicaraguan women's voices they are hearing." [Albuquerque: 185] Randall is a former U.S. expatriate who has, lived in Mexico, Cuba, Nicaragua, and for a short time in nineteen-seventy five, the former North Vietnam. She is an oral historian, poet, photographer and passionate Marxist-feminist. Randall refuses to emphasize either "Marxist" or "feminist" at the expense of the other. [Gathering Rage: 13-23] While in Mexico, in the nineteen-sixties, she edited the literary journal *El Corno Emplumado: The Plumed Horn*. After the student riots of the late nineteen-sixties and the subsequent government crackdown, she fled to Cuba with Robert Cohen [Portrait of a Revolutionary: 1-46]. Living in Mexico, she mistakenly renounced her American citizenship, assuming her life in Mexico obligated her to do so. Because of this, when she attempted to emigrate back to the United States in nineteen-eighty four, she endured seven years of court battles with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. She currently teaches at Trinity College in Connecticut.

In *Sandino's Daughters Revisited* Randall interviews thirteen women. These thirteen women have, in their own ways, struggled with the male dominated FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front]. The dialogues are what Karl Marx referred to as a "revolution in permanence." [Rosa Luxemburg: viii] They take place after the defeat of the FSLN in the nineteen ninety national elections. These women worked extremely hard and sacrificed their lives for the FSLN. How do these women engage themselves dialectically with the defeat of a heartfelt, populist revolution? "It takes women coming together to develop a language outside patriarchal profession and its canon for there to be real understanding of what has been perpetuated and how to best deal with it." [SDR: 32]

The FSLN broke the United States backed, ruling Somoza family. They refused to allow the Somozas to perpetuate their greed and corruption. The unemployment rate before the FSLN victory in nineteen seventy-nine was twenty-two percent. Before the literacy campaign by the FSLN, the illiteracy rate was sixty percent of all adults. The Somoza family hoarded nearly all of Nicaragua's resources. [SD: v] "This poverty and backwardness is the underside of the development [...] of a capitalist economy. [...] This translates into benefits for multinational corporations [...] at the expense of Nicaraguans." [SD: viii]

The United States has hegemonic power with Nicaragua. As Randall shows in *SD* and *SDR*, this hegemony has been present since the nineteenth century. The United States has constantly tried to colonize the people of Central America. "Beginning in the 1950's, much U.S. aid in Third World countries was linked to policies limiting the reproduction of the working class and poor, including programs that ranged from laboratory-like experimentation with birth control pills and intrauterine devices to forced sterilization. By the 1960's, one third of all Puerto Rican women of child bearing age were sterilized. [...] President Eisenhower remarked that the best way to avert the threat of popular movements was to prevent revolutionaries from being born." Along with colonizing Latin America, the U.S. colonized women's bodies.

The thirteen Nicaraguan women's voices of *SDR* engage themselves in dialectical struggle with other women, their various theories and beliefs and their nation. The women engage themselves with their families and the histories behind them. Some families have a history of collaboration with the Somoza family. Sofia Montenegro, a FSLN member, comes from such a petit bourgeois family. "Back in the 1930's my father [also] fought against Sandino<sup>1</sup> a hell of a legacy[.] And my oldest brother was also a military man [...] [h]e, too, fought against the Sandinistas." [287] Montenegro describes how she comes to terms with her love for her brother and, her hatred for a government so corrupt, it tortures its citizens. "[M]y brother already knew that some of his siblings - myself and some of the others - had joined the Front [...] [a]nd we tried to get him to desert or leave. [...] He said, 'Look, kids, in this room we are brothers and sisters. But if we come upon each other in the street and you have a gun and so do I, you'd better shoot. Because you can be sure I will.'" [295] Later, Montenegro describes in harrowing detail her brother's burial and her relationship with her brother's family. [294-298]

Daisy Zamora, another woman revolutionary presented, is one of Nicaragua's most esteemed poets. Bill Moyers presented her on his PBS series *The Language of Life*, in the summer of 1995. Zamora describes with disillusionment how the new FSLN government relegated artists and writers to the bottom of a vertical hierarchy. In the early to mid nineteen eighties, the FSLN organized poetry workshops for the citizens of Nicaragua. "The poetry workshops [...] were an attempt to get people to read poetry, too, and to understand that creativity belongs to us all: we have only to tap it." [107] Unfortunately, the workshops were lost to an intraparty struggle for dominance. "No one person, just because he or she liked you or didn't like you or wanted your job or had some personal motive for attack, should ever have been able to destroy a revolutionary project like that." [107] Daisy Zamora also relates the stories of sexual harassment that were allowed to flourish in this "people's revolution."

<sup>1</sup> "[...] Augusto César Sandino, a nationalist leader who fought against the U.S. Marines from 1927 to 1934. [The Sandino led army] succeeded in routing the invaders from their homeland, but Sandino himself was betrayed and murdered by Somoza." [SDR: 10]

North American leftists who read this, come away realizing how hegemonic power relationships permeate our own thinking. When we see history, we must resist the urge to colonize that has anchored so much of the Nicaragua-U.S. relationship.

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(from p. 2)

recent being this description, published in this issue, of the nature of the class struggle in the industrial city between New Delhi and Agra. David Noble's article about the information highway is also taken from *Monthly Review*, this time a more recent issue, April 1995. It provides a welcome respite from the sort of nonsense we are getting in the major media implying that computers will provide workers with universal prosperity--a la Newt Gingrich's idea of furnishing the children with lap top computers to lift them from poverty.

The SLP's ideas about the role of the party strike me as a useful contribution to the ongoing debate among non-market socialists and anarchists. Written by Nathan Karp, then the SLP's National Secretary, it appeared originally in the *Weekly People* in the latter part of the 1970s, as I recall. It was included when the SLP began publishing articles from the WP as small inexpensive pamphlets in a series called Socialist Studies around 1980.

Larry Gambone's article on Joseph Dietzgen was published originally as a sort of advertising flyer for a pamphlet edition of an excerpt of around a hundred pages from Dietzgen's major book, *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy*, published in 1906 by Charles H. Kerr and Company. Larry tells me that the pamphlet is now out of print. Although the review doesn't say it in so many words, Ken Smith's *The Survival of the Weakest* is the nearest extant thing to an encyclopedia for non-market socialist. As usual we finish with a few "Notes, Announcements, and Short Reviews."

## BULLETIN MATTERS

## Finances

DB's finances seem to be following the stock market. During the past two months receipts have fallen off sharply from a low figure for the preceding two months. The fat we accumulated during those heady days last spring and summer when I was talking about declaring a dividend has disappeared and we now have a deficit. If things continue like this we will have to downsize and restructure, laying off help here in Grand Rapids and outsourcing some work offshore. Part of the problem was the \$85 annual bulk mailing fee, but the DB is simply not getting the volume of business it has grown accustomed to. Actually, though, the earlier prosperity was an unusual thing. Over the thirteen years of DB's experience it has spent as much time in the red as in the black.

(to p. 21)

It is necessary that attempts be made to differentiate between formal, phoney, real struggles and their admixtures. By and large, the mass media highlights formal struggles. From amongst real struggles only exceptional mass upsurges are reported/ postmortemed. A major problem is that not only individual struggles, even the very large number of collective struggles taking place daily are not known. They do not form the memory of wage-workers. One of the necessities for the emancipatory project is to be able to learn from experiences across time and space. Detailed reports of the mundane/daily [real] struggles and their mass circulation amongst wage-workers is essential for this.

Faridabad is a major industrial complex in the suburbs of Delhi. Below are some translations from our monthly Hindi language publication, Faridabad Majdoor Samachar's June '94 and July '94 issues. These reports, in comparison to the numerous daily struggles going on, are only the tip of the iceberg even for Faridabad alone.

In the month of May '94 [ reported in June issue of FMS ]:

\* There was an agreement in Escorts Railway Division that workers coming to the factory by means of their own or public transport could enter the factory without any problem till the arrival of factory buses from Delhi. After the recent agreement the management started recording the names of those workers who reached the factory after eight O'clock although factory buses after detour to Escorts First Plant etc. continued to reach the Railway division around 8.15 a.m. Reacting to this, on the 10th of May, workers reaching the factory before 8 a.m. stopped at the factory gate and soon a crowd of workers on foot, on bicycles, scooters and motorcycles was formed at the factory gate. Only after the factory buses arrived at 8.15 a.m., workers started entering the factory. The management locked the main gate. Workers had to face difficulty in entering along with cycles-scooters-motorcycles from the small side-gate. Thereupon, workers who had entered the factory also returned to the factory gate and demanded that the main gate be opened. Assessing the situation, the management quietly opened the main gate of the factory. Since then the management has stopped the practice of taking down names in the Escorts Railway Division.

\* A thousand workers from Palwal side came to work in Escorts plants everyday. Five to seven kilometers on bicycles from villages early in the morning to catch train from Palwal, 45 minutes train journey, hurry from the railway station to the factories is the daily life of these daily up and down workers. The duty covers not eight but 13-14 hours. Because of this the aspiration for a few minutes leisure and the desire to pass on work-load to others besides rough, obstinate behaviour develop to quite some extent. Due to these reasons other workers often start disliking these workers.

To save money Escorts management has not arranged factory buses for Palwal side workers. But on the condition that they give full production, the management used to allow these workers to reach their plants till 8.30 instead of 8. In the recent agreement besides increasing work load, the management has done away with this small concession as well. Palwal side workers reaching factory gates after eight were turned back from the gates. On May 10 after



getting down from trains Escorts workers instead of rushing towards their plants got together and reached the union office.

Leaders were panic stricken by this collective outburst. They locked the union office and ran away. Workers began a sit down at the union office. Leaders declared workers' step gangsterism. Leaders published handbills against the sit-down. To create dissension between different groups of workers skeletons were unearthed from their coffins and seeds for further divisions were sown. According to 'Majdoor Morcha' this lockout of the union office was similar to managements lockouts.

On the 11th of May, also Palwal side Escorts workers after alighting the trains joined the sit-down in front of the locked union office instead of going to the factories. Seeing the sit-down continue, management-union said that they would consider the issue and announced the restoration of the old situation till then. Thereafter, the workers agreed to end this sit-down at the union office. Lock-out of the union office was lifted.

\* Dirt, dust and smoke in Jhalani Tools are of such an order, that workers are always desperate to get out of the plants. At lunch time most of the workers are out of the factory gates. One day when some workers were entering the 1st plant, a few minutes after lunch time was over, the management noted their names. The next day, all 1st plant workers in that shift went out of the factory at lunch time. After the lunch time was over all the workers stayed out far longer than the previous day and then together entered the factory. The management did not note down names and stopped doing so thereafter.

\* Goodyear management has started suspending workers on minor issues. On the 9th of May, it suspended some workers. After this, workers on duty decided on their own that no one will do overtime in the place of suspended workers. This collective step of the workers posed problems for the Goodyear management.

\* 'Power' shoe department workers in the Bata factory on the 25th of May brought to the notice of the department incharge the bad quality of the shoe material and told him that the shape of shoes was getting spoiled due to this. As a result the workers would be paid less. The department incharge browbeat the workers and told them to do their job properly. Work, deduction in wages and threats agitated the worker. Resentment spread not only among the 'Power' workers but also among the workers of the other departments. Within minutes workers stopped production in the whole factory. Eventually, Bata management had to apologise for the behaviour of its officer.

\* In Escorts 1st Plant also management has started harassing the workers after the last agreement. The management is trying to appropriate every second of the workers' time. The workers sought to counter the management's tactics by taking a collective step. One day after the shift ending at 4.30 p.m, none of the workers took out their bicycles or scooters from the stand and all the workers gathered at the gate. The gate was jammed. Workers for the next shift could not enter the factory gate and a crowd was formed on both the sides of the gate. Some people tried to convince the workers to clear the jam but did not succeed. The gate was jammed for an hour and the machines lay idle. From the next day, the management specified different gates for those coming for

duty and those leaving after finishing theirs.

In the Month of <sup>June</sup>~~July~~ '94 [reported in the July issue of F.M.S.]

\* There is hardly a factory in faridabad in which the Canteen workers are employees of the company. Everywhere managements have taken the cover of contractors and have imposed 12-14 hours duty but wages one-third of the legal minimum. In some factories, under pressure from workers, the canteen workers are permanent contract workers. They get the minimum legal wages for 8 hours work. Even in these factories open discrimination is practiced against the canteen workers.

Jhalani Tools management paid the wages for the month of April on the 18th of May, but the canteen workers were still not paid. When the canteen workers struck work on the 19th of May, the management started paying the permanent canteen workers. But it refused to pay the casual workers even then. The permanent workers refused to take their wages. The management was forced to pay the casual and permanent canteen workers at the same time. It also had to promise that the wages for the month of May would be paid to the canteen workers alongwith the other workers.

The wages for the month of May were paid on June 11. Among the canteen workers only those of the IIIrd Plant were paid. 12th was Sunday. On the 13th, canteen workers of 1st and IIInd Plants struck work. By 8.30 a.m. the news of canteen workers' strike had created disquiet amongst other workers. Thereupon, the welfare officer in the 1st plant reached the canteen. The canteen workers reminded him of the earlier promise and demanded their wages. Meanwhile, the other workers of the plant threatened to stop the production if they did not get the 9 o'clock tea. The welfare officer rushed to the personnel officer, who in turn went to plant manager. After the assurance that the canteen workers would be paid by the evening, work commenced in the 1st and IIInd plant canteens. The workers were paid their wages in the evening.

\* On the 13th of June, during a tea break in Hitkari Potteries, a worker in the canteen showed the tea to a leader and told her, "See, there is neither milk, nor tea leaves and nor is it boiled properly. But you leaders have tea which is prepared with tea leaves boiled in milk. What does it matter as to what quality of tea workers get? it would be better if you get poison, put in this tea so that all workers would die and then the leaders could enjoy themselves." The leader became angry and she complained to the chief personnel manager about the worker. The next day was that worker's rest day. When he reported for duty on the 15th, he was stopped at the factory gate. In the suspension cum charge-sheet letter given to him, the management on behalf of another leader charged him with misbehaving with that leader's wife! The news spread and during the lunch at 12.30 p.m. workers started gathering at the cycle stand. The management dispersed the workers with the help of the security staff.

On June 22nd there was a heated exchange between a worker and a supervisor. The supervisor alleged that the worker was drunk. Other members of the management enquired and finding the supervisors allegations hollow, they let



the matter pass. When that worker reached the factory for duty on June 23rd, he was stopped at the gate and handed a suspension letter. The letter said that the charge against him was so serious that he would be given charge-sheet on July 1st! Following this, the workers of the maintenance department got together and went to the plant manager.

On June 24th, a supervisor misbehaved with a woman worker in glazing department of Hitkari Potteries. Thereupon, all the workers of the glazing department informed the management of the happening in writing. On 25th June, all the workers of the glazing department, together went to meet the management and enquired about the action against the supervisor. The management said that it is examining the matter.

\* The plating department of the Jhalani Tools was again filled with smoke on May 30th during the second shift. The plating workers got together and went to the works manager. A guard was stationed outside the works manager room. In view of the increasing incidents of workers collectively presenting their problems to the manager, the management had recently posted a guard outside the manager's office and ordered him not to allow entry to workers in groups. The guard told the plating workers, "You can not meet the *sahib* together. Get your leader. One of you can go along with the leader to meet the manager." The guard did not relent even after workers' efforts to convince him. While this was going on an assistant came out of the room with the manager's belongings. The manager followed him - ready to go home. Workers surrounded the works manager and asked him to come with them to the plating department. The manager insisted on taking there instead. But the workers were adamant and he had to go to the plating department. Smoke from the harding department had filled the plating department. The smoke was irritating to the eyes. With water flowing down his eyes the manager went to the harding department. There the workers told him that if they did not do that work, the material would become soft. Also, the exhaust fans were either not working or had been removed. The workers of the plating and the harding department told the manager that they had repeatedly informed the management about the exhaust fans. Surrounded by the workers, the works manager then ordered work to be stopped in the harding department for 6 days to improve the conditions there.

\* The workers of Escorts Railway Division had acquired a right<sup>4</sup> when there division was shifted from the 1st plant to Sector 24. To maintain that right, the workers had been struggling for more than a month till 14th of June. Every day workers who reached the factory before 8 a.m. would stop at the gate. A crowd of workers with bicycles, scooters, motorcycles and those on foot would gather at the factory gate. Only after workers, who came by the factory buses which reached the factory at 8.15 a.m., had arrived did the workers en masse enter the factory.

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<sup>4</sup> For some background information, see the workers' struggles reported in the June '94 issue of F.M.S.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY

by DAVID NOBLE

At the end of November 1994, the truth about the information highway finally got out. Protesting the announcement of another 5,600 layoffs, 1,200 Bell-Atlantic employees in Pennsylvania wore T-shirts to work which graphically depicted themselves as Information Highway Roadkill. The layoffs were just the latest round of cutbacks at Bell-Atlantic, which have been matched by the elimination of jobs at the other giants of the telecommunications industry—ATT, NYNEX, Northern Telecom—supposedly the very places where new jobs are to be created with the information highway. In reality, the technology is enabling companies to extend their operations and enlarge their profits while reducing their workforce and the pay and security of those who remain by contracting out work to cheaper labor around the globe and by replacing people with machines. The very workers who are constructing the new information infrastructure are among the first to go, but not the only ones. The same fate is facing countless workers in manufacturing and service indus-

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tries in the wake of the introduction of these new information technologies.

What is most striking about the Bell-Atlantic episode is not just the provocative fashion statement of the workers, members of Communication Workers of America District 13. Rather, it was the company's exaggerated response. Bell-Atlantic demanded that the workers remove the T-shirts and, when they refused, it suspended them without pay. According to Vince Maison, president of the union, the employer suspended the employees out of expressed fear that their message would be seen by the public. Significantly, management was concerned about adverse publicity not just for Bell-Atlantic but, more importantly, for the information highway itself. This was the first time the information highway was unambiguously linked with unemployment, by a union and workforce presumably best situated to reap its promised benefits. Apparently the company believed there was too much riding on the information highway bandwagon to allow this sober message to get around. But it did anyway. The (probably illegal) management action backfired. Rather than a few hundred customers catching a glimpse of the T-shirts during the course of the day's work, millions throughout North America saw them through the media coverage of the suspensions; within hours, the union was inundated with phone calls of support and orders for the T-shirts. The truth was out.

By now probably everyone has heard of the information highway, as a result of the massive propaganda blitzkrieg of the last year. Announcements heralding the dawn of a new age emanate incessantly and insistently from every quarter. The media gush with the latest info highway reports (but not the fatalities), all levels of government are daily pressured into diverting public monies into yet another private trough, every hi-tech firm, not to mention every hustler and con artist in the business world and academic world is rushing to cash in on the manufactured hysteria. The aggressive assault on our senses is aimed at securing public support and subsidy for the construction of the new commercial infrastructure. Its mes-



sage, which has become the mind-numbing multinational mantra, is simple and direct: We have no other choice. Our very survival, it is alleged, as individuals, a nation, a society depend upon this urgent development. Those without it will be left behind in the global competition. And those with it? A recent "Futurescape" advertisement supplement to the *Globe and Mail* by Rogers Cantel and Bell Canada warned that the information highway "raises the ante in competition. If we don't act, Canada and Canadian companies will be left behind. . . . the information highway is not a luxury technology for the rich. It is the way of the future. And those who do not get on the highway will not have any way of reaching their ultimate destination."

And what exactly is the destiny advanced by the information highway? Ask the Bell-Atlantic employees. The propaganda never mentions the roadkill, of course, but that is the future for many. Most people in Canada instinctively seem to know this already. According to a 1993 Gallup poll, 41 percent of those currently employed believe they will lose their jobs. But, despite this intuition, people have been terrorized into a hapless fatalism. It's inevitable. Or else they have been seduced by the exciting array of new tools and diversions: home-shopping, home-videos, home-learning, home-entertainment, home-communication. The operative word is home, home is where people without jobs are—if they still have a home. The focus is on leisure, because there will be a lot more of it, in the form of mass unemployment. (Some lucky few will get home-work, as their job takes over their home in the sweatshops of the future.) This is where we are headed on the information highway.

To see where we are headed requires no voodoo forecasting, futuristic speculation, much less federally funded research. We just need to take a look at where we've been, and where we are. The returns are already in on the Information Age, and the information highway promises merely more of the same, at an accelerated place.

In the wake of the information revolution (now four decades old—the term cybernetics and automation were coined in 1947). People are now working harder and longer (with compulsory overtime), under worsening working conditions with greater anxiety, stress, and accidents, with less skills, less security, less autonomy, less power (individually and collectively), less benefits, and less pay. Without question the technology has been developed and used to deskill and discipline the workforce in a global speed-up of unprecedented proportions. And those still working are the lucky ones. For the technology has been designed above all to displace.

Structural (that is, permanent and systemic as opposed to cyclical) unemployment in Canada has increased with each decade of the Information Age. With the increasing deployment of so-called "labor-saving" technology (actually labor-cost saving), official average unemployment has jumped from 4 percent in the 1950s, 5.1 percent in the 1960s, 6.7 percent in the 1970s, and 9.3 percent in the 1980s, to 11 percent so far in the 1990s.

These, of course, are the most conservative estimates (actual unemployment is closer to double these figures). Today we are in the midst of what is called a jobless recovery, symptomatic and symbolic of the new age. Output and profits rise without the jobs which used to go with them. Moreover, one fifth of those employed are only part-time or temporary employees, with little or no benefits beyond barely subsistence wages, and no security whatever.

In 1993, an economist with the Canadian Manufacturers Association estimated that between 1989 and 1993, 200,000 manufacturing jobs were eliminated through the use of new technology—another conservative estimate. And that was only in manufacturing, and before the latest wave of information highway technology, which will make past developments seem quaint in comparison.

None of this has happened by accident. The technology, was developed, typically at public expense, with precisely these ends in mind, by government (notably military), finance, and

business elites—to shorten the chain of command and extend communications and control (the military origins of the Internet), to allow for instantaneous monitoring of money markets and fund transfers, and to enable manufacturers to extend the range of their operations in pursuit of cheaper and more compliant labor.

Thus as the ranks of the permanently marginalized and impoverished swell, and the gap between rich and poor widens to nineteenth-century dimensions, it is no mere coincidence that we see a greater concentration of military, political, financial, and corporate power than ever before in our history. In the hands of such self-serving elites—and it is now more than ever in their hands—the information highway, the latest incarnation of the information revolution, will only be used to compound the crime.

Visions of democratization and popular empowerment via the net are dangerous delusions; whatever the gains, they are overwhelmingly overshadowed and more than nullified by the losses. As the computer screens brighten with promise for the few, the light at the end of the tunnel grows dimmer for the many.

No doubt there has been some barely audible and guarded discussion if not yet debate about the social implications of the information highway, focusing upon such issues as access, commercial vs. public control, and privacy. There is also now a federal advisory commission on the information highway, although it meets in secret without public access or scrutiny, doubtless to protect the proprietary interests of the companies that dominate its membership. But nowhere is there any mention of the truth about the information highway, which is mass unemployment.

For decades we have silently subsidized the development of the very technologies which have been used to destroy our lives and livelihoods, and we are about to do it again, without debate, without any safeguards, without any guarantees. The calamity we now confront, as a consequence, rivals the upheaval of the first Industrial Revolution two centuries

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**Contributions:** Charles F. Diggs Sr. \$10; Steve Hoyle \$25; Pennsylvania \$9; Glen Johnson \$10; Robert Blau \$7; Tony Laffan \$7.25. Total \$68.25. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE November 2, 1995 (per bank statement) \$74.55

#### RECEIPTS

Contributions	\$ 68.25
Subs and sales	<u>57.00</u>
Total	\$ 125.25

#### DISBURSEMENTS

Copier repair (1/2)	\$ 11.55
Postage	90.00
Postage due	4.00
Bulk mailing fee	85.00
Printing	47.93
Bank charges	<u>4.00</u>
Total	\$ 242.48

BALANCE December 18, 1995 [deficit] \$42.68

Fraternaly submitted,

Frank Girard  
for the DB



## *The Role of a Socialist Party*

The world is not exactly the same today as it was when the Socialist Labor Party was organized toward the end of the 19th century. There were no jet planes, computers, atomic power plants, thermonuclear weapons, or spacecraft. Nor was there the widespread concern with the pollution of our air, land and water. But there was widespread poverty, recurring unemployment crises, spreading urban chaos, racial prejudice and discrimination, brazen violations of democratic rights, international conflicts that threatened to erupt or periodically did erupt into open warfare and a host of other economic and social problems.

Most of these problems still plague us. They have, in fact, grown worse. The prevailing social turmoil and conflict all attest to that. Bluntly stated, the vaunted capitalist system in America is perpetually on the verge of complete collapse these days.

Unfortunately, its collapse would not necessarily result in the automatic establishment of a better social system. In the absence of the human forces required to accomplish that end, the collapse of capitalism could lead to stark reaction and the establishment of brutal fascism. The consequences would be greater deprivation and suffering for the vast working-class majority.

That possibility is real. Nevertheless, it does not justify pessimism and dismay, for it is not the only possibility. There are social forces in motion that could lead to other results--including the establishment of a free and affluent society.

There are some encouraging signs. There are stirrings among the workers. Increasing numbers of them are questioning the values and standards of our present society. More and more of them are openly criticizing the system--questioning its inequalities and demonstrating a growing contempt for its politics and its politicians.

Among the millions of workers belonging to the unions there also is rising dissatisfaction, much of it directed at the bureaucrats who run the unions. In increasing numbers, rank-and-file workers are demanding a more effective voice in the operation and affairs of their unions.

In short, there is a climate of social unrest, an atmosphere of questioning and challenge, and a spreading

demand for change in many areas of our society. These developments could serve the forces of progress and lead to the establishment of a new, viable social system.

For that to happen, however, an important development must take place. There must be a growth of class-consciousness among the workers. There must be a realization of the need for a reconstruction of society on democratic and equitable social and economic principles--a socialist reconstruction of society.

A revolutionary transformation of the social and economic basis of society is not a simple task. Nor is it one to be accomplished by some select, self-appointed group or party on behalf of the vast majority. On the contrary, the revolution to socialism can be assured only if it is the collective effort of the working class of the nation. That class must be involved consciously and actively. The revolutionary effort must be under its direct influence and control. In the words of Rosa Luxemburg, the revolution "must arise out of the growing political training of the mass of the people."

Daniel De Leon was emphatic in his warning that "the proletarian army of emancipation cannot consist of a dumb, driven herd." Rather it must be organized on the basis of a comprehensive understanding of its class interests and a clear comprehension of the socialist goal.

### **Vanguardism Rejected**

These are not idle rhetorical points and few, if any, of the organizations on the left would contest them. Yet by their daily actions and in their day-to-day propaganda work many left organizations in large measure violate or ignore them. They conduct themselves in ways that demonstrate that they consider the proletariat a mass that can be led to revolutionary action only if it is manipulated by a party--a party that provides the "right leadership."

Moreover, these organizations envision the party as the dominant body--the vanguard of the class--with a permanent role to play in the new society. They consider that role to be not merely political and educational but also governmental and administrative. In short, they see the party as an institution of proletarian rule in the new society.

The Socialist Labor Party does not accept this Leninist concept of the party. It considers it a fundamental departure from the sound Marxist premise that the emancipation of the working class from wage slavery must be its

own conscious act. The SLP holds that the dominant factor in the socialist revolution must be the classconscious proletariat, not a small, close-knit, vanguard party that leads the revolutionary effort and then remains in existence to conduct the affairs of the new society.

This is not to say that the party has no role to play. It has a very important role. It must actively assist the development of classconsciousness among workers through its agitational and educational work, offer a program of organization that will consolidate the power of the workers, do all within its means to urge the revolutionary organization into existence, and keep the socialist goal in sight at all times. The party, then, must be what Rosa Luxemburg described as "the most resolute part of the proletariat that at every step points out to the whole broad mass of workers its historical tasks."

In short, the party's important role is to assist and give impetus to the social forces that are welding the proletariat into the revolutionary force. But in doing so it must not substitute itself for the proletariat as the revolutionary force, nor as the future instrument of workers' rule. If that happens, the party becomes a threat--the threat of a dictatorship over the proletariat. There is eloquent testimony to that in the world today.

It must be remembered that there is a vast difference between the "regulated docility of an oppressed class" by a party claiming to speak and act in its behalf and the self-discipline and classconscious activity of a "class struggling for its emancipation." Socialist democracy, Luxemburg correctly declared, must be the accomplishment of the organized, classconscious workers not a decree "from behind a few official desks." Vanguardism inevitably contains the danger of a proletarian dictatorship "transformed into a system of class rule based on unthinking obedience to the commands of leaders."

A militant party of socialism must also be capable of responding to the "pace" and events of the class struggle and of becoming involved in that struggle in fact as well as in words. It must avoid reducing Marxism-De Leonism to a set of abstract principles and formulas. Toward that end it needs to acknowledge its obligation to support, to the extent that capacities and resources permit, the legitimate efforts of workers to improve their lives, relieve their miseries and ease their burdens. As Marx observed in a letter to F. Bolte (Nov. 23, 1871):

"Where the working class is not yet far enough advanced in its organization to undertake a decisive cam-

paign against the collective power, i.e., the political power of the ruling classes, it must at any rate be trained for this by a continual agitation against and by a hostile attitude toward the policy of the ruling classes. Otherwise it will remain a plaything in their hands..."

But in meeting this obligation the party must not become a purveyor of reformist promises. It must not dilute the scientific content of Marxism-De Leonism. Rather, it is imperative that it promote a clear, classconscious understanding of the nature of capitalism.

Granted, that is not an easy task. Nor is it a new one. We are not the first to be confronted with it. As Rosa Luxemburg observed: "The basic question of the socialist movement has always been how to bring its immediate practical activity into agreement with its ultimate goal."

Whether we get the workers' attention during these critical days of capitalist disintegration will depend on a number of factors. Among the most important of those factors are 1) the zeal and alertness with which we approach the task, follow developments and events and seek out opportunities; 2) the Marxist-De Leonist insight and socialist analysis we bring to bear in connection with such opportunities; and 3) the tact and intelligence with which we conduct our work. Needless to say, at all times we must reject reformist opportunism in every aspect. We must never compromise or subordinate our socialist principles and goal for any temporary advantage. As Luxemburg correctly warned:

"Opportunism is a political game which can be lost in two ways: not only basic principles but also practical success may be forfeited....If we begin to chase after what is 'possible' according to the principles of opportunism, unconcerned with our own principles, and by means of statesmanlike barter, then we will soon find ourselves in the same situation as the hunter who has not only failed to slay the deer, but has also lost his gun in the process."

#### De Leonist Program

Safeguards against such errors must be built into the basic program of a socialist party. And they are built into the De Leonist program of the Socialist Labor Party. For that program is based upon the recognition and acceptance of the fact that the revolutionary change to socialism must be the classconscious act of the workers themselves.



Accordingly, the SLP calls upon workers to organize politically for the purpose of advocating this revolutionary change. Such a political organization would not only promote classconsciousness, but also project a program of organization that workers could implement toward this end. It would seek to build a party capable of capturing the political state with a view to dismantling the state when the workers assume power.

Simultaneously, the De Leonist program calls for the organization of revolutionary socialist unions. These are essential to mobilize the economic power of the proletariat, not only to resist the ever increasing encroachments of capitalism more effectively, but ultimately to provide the essential power to enforce the revolutionary demand.

In the revolutionary equation the economic organization is the decisive one. Capable of assuming control and continuing to administer and operate the essential industries and social services, it can exercise the power and provide the decisive leverage to "swing" the revolution. Moreover, it has the structure that provides the necessary foundation for socialist society.

This is the De Leonist socialist industrial union program. It is unique and essential to the revolutionary movement in the United States. It provides the basic organizational structure for consolidating the massive power of our class. It clearly defines the socialist goal. It provides the means for defending working-class interests and pursuing working-class objectives as long as capitalism exists. It provides the societal framework on which to build the new social structure as soon as capitalism is abolished.

Moreover, the SIU program makes clear that it is the workers who must construct the new societal framework and own, control and administer the new social structure. It thereby provides the basic concept for workers' control of the entire economy and all other essential elements of society. And it is a concept that enables the workers to exercise that control directly rather than through any surrogate party that would contain the germs for new forms of economic and political enslavement. It provides for an industrial government composed of councils of workers democratically elected from the industries and social services.

Once the workers' mass organizations are in control of the entire economy and social structure--and without them proletarian control is an illusion--there is no need

or justification for any separate governmental structure; no need for a political state apart from the SIU. Certainly there will be problems of all kinds. But whether such problems are minor or serious, anticipated or unexpected, all of them will be within the capacity of the SIU government to deal with.

The essence of the SLP's De Leonist concept of SIU government is that it puts the workers in complete control and provides for the most democratic form of social administration. It is a concept capable of assuring the success not only of the revolutionary act but of the revolution itself. It is, therefore, a solid, indispensable revolutionary program.

Socialist Labor Party  
111 W. Evelyn Ave. #209  
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

[ ] Please send me free literature on socialism.

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# JOSEPH DIETZGEN

25

## HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ANARCHIST AND LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENTS



Joseph Dietzgen, known as 'the Tanner', was born near Cologne in 1828 and as a youth apprenticed to the leather industry. During the Revolution of 1848 he became a supporter of Karl Marx, who years later mentioned him in the Introduction to *Capital* as one of the few people to understand the work. Marx also introduced him to the 1872 congress of the International as "our philosopher". He was self-taught and has an honorable place with other 'proletarian' philosophers such as Blake the engraver, Boehme the cobbler, Spinoza the lens-grinder and Paine the printer. He contributed many articles to the working class press and his first book, Nature of Human Brain Work, was published in 1869.

The Tanner immigrated to the USA in 1884 and became editor of Der Sozialist, a position retained until moving from New York to Chicago in 1886 - the year of the Haymarket Tragedy. When the anarchist editors of the paper, Chicagoer Arbeiterzeitung were imprisoned, he freely offered his assistance as an editor and ran the journal in their absence. This action created much tension between Dietzgen and the leaders of the Socialist Labor Party, who



were trying to distance themselves as much as possible from the persecuted anarchists. He responded by claiming, "that while the anarchists have some muddleheads in their ranks, the socialists in turn have a lot of cowards." Dietzgen then announced that "he too was an anarchist". But the proletarian philosopher did not have long to live, felled by a heart attack in the middle of a discussion. Exactly 100 years ago, he was buried in Waldheim Cemetery, Chicago, beside his friends the Haymarket Martyrs.

#### Dietzgen's Philosophy

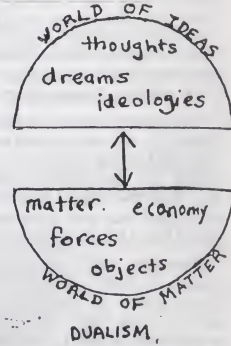
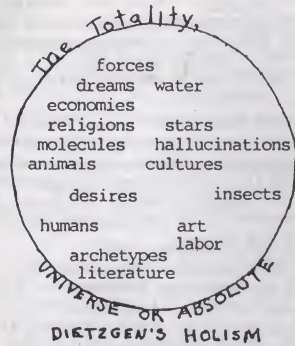
For Dietzgen, philosophy played an important role in the struggle for freedom. Many activists feel that political awareness has little to do with something as apparently rarefied as philosophy. But, we do unquestioningly accept the given form of logic and underlying theory of knowledge of this society and upon these views, base our assumptions about the world. Hence philosophy cannot be avoided, for example, if to you reality seems to consist of fixed and unconnected fragments and all choices are reduced to either/or decisions, your political/social views are going to be somewhat different from someone who sees reality as highly complex, interrelated processes.

His philosophy was rooted in the question, "what happens when we think"? Thought occurs in the form of concepts, which is a process involving a person who experiences a phenomenon and the phenomenon experienced. Hence, thought requires an object, and this object can be physical or non-physical. Knowledge is not the direct result of input from a phenomenon, like with a reflection in a mirror, for the mind structures and patterns how we interpret reality. Such concepts as 'truth' or 'causality' are assumptions that we make and impose upon the world.

If we could acquire knowledge by simply 'copying' the object experienced in our mind, there would be few difficulties involved in understanding the world. There is the problem that we can never know an object in its entirety - hence never fully knowing something. Consider attempting to have complete knowledge of a tree down to the sub-atomic level. Consequently, all knowledge is theoretical and everyone is a theoretician. As a result, Dietzgen did not over-emphasize the role of academics and 'professional revolutionaries' and instead looked to the creativity of the working people.

"Our thought" he said, "involves an interaction of the general and the specific". The meaning of this statement is best given by an example. Suppose you are on a mountain and see a green area in the distance. By looking through binoculars you discover that the patch is made up of trees - it is a forest. In this example you went from the general (green patch) to the specific (trees) and out of the relationship between the two created a more developed concept. (forest) This process is usually unconscious. One more example. If you saw a large elongated object covered with leaves, you would say it was a tree. Now in actuality, this tree is a unique and individual object as are all things in the universe, but since phenomena cannot be understood in an ultimate or total manner, we form a concept or generalization about the object. In this example, the concept is given the name 'tree' in the English language. Thought can be considered as a process which unites the seemingly opposite qualities of the general and the specific, resulting in the formation of a new more encompassing generalization. This is dialectics and we are all engaged in it - by the simple act of thinking. A conclusion which may be drawn from considering thought as conceptual/dialectical is that no truths are absolute. In daily life 'to err is human' and dogmatic and sectarian practices - which always claim to be founded upon some absolute principle are ultimately hollow.

The fact that thought must have an object has direct bearing upon Dietzgen's concept of materialism - a concept quite different from the usual Marxist dogma. For him, the object of thought encompassed the totality of everything that exists. To exist means to have impact on other things - existence means to have relationship. The totality of everything is the universe and this cannot be reduced to some essence such as 'spirit', 'matter' or any other construct. Most materialists reduce the whole of reality to a reflection of 'matter', i.e., physical forces and objects. They simply write thought off



as a secondary phenomenon - a mirror image of the 'material' world and hence not quite genuine. Idealism reduces everything to a reflection of 'ideas' or 'spirit' and denegrates the physical aspects of existence. When Dietzgen refers to 'materialism' in terms of his own philosophy, he is referring to the totality or universe, a view which unites the conventional 'materialism' and 'idealism' in a more developed concept.

The split between idealism and materialism is an example of dualism (fragmentation of reality) and Dietzgen's philosophy was an attempt to overcome this division by explaining that the apparently opposing sides were merely different aspects of a unified world. Everything that has impact is 'real' and hence 'material' - thoughts, dreams and ideologies are as existent as stones, rats or capitalists. The materialism/idealism pseudo-conflict contributes to political divisiveness. 'Materialists' overemphasize economic forces to the detriment of the cultural or psychological. 'Idealists' regard politics as a matter of imposing the will and reject historical or economic conditions as vulgar. A Dietzgenian approach considers all the factors in maintaining or changing society.

The classical philosophical problems such as 'mind vs. matter' or 'form vs. content' are also false dualities, since both aspects exist in the real world and are inseparable. Nothing is truly separate from anything else and all things are interrelated, with the differences and similarities being a matter of degree. In a world without absolute separation, all truths are relative, but this relativity must not be taken as an absolute. With an absolute relativity no one could make a single decision. Truth then, must be seen as an on-going process of discovery. It is necessary to be able to distinguish between essential (qualitative) differences and secondary ones. For example; some people wish to abolish exploitation and oppression, while others wish merely to lighten the burden. There is an essential difference



between these two positions. Those in the former group may have many divergent opinions on other issues, yet a genuine unity may be built around the common goals.

Dietzgen denied that absolute truth exists - in the sense that one individual aspect, quality or thing was the complete and total truth. Unfortunately there is a strong tendency to absolutize an aspect of the world - a process where a single factor is abstracted and the whole of reality reduced to it - creating a false absolute. This process is ideology, the partial reality taken as the whole and hence we have the sorry spectacle of anarchists quarrelling with each other - social ecologists who sneer at working people, syndicalists contemptuous of 'marginals' and a mass of hair-splitting dogmatists, each clinging to their small portion of the truth and proclaiming this meagre fragment as the word of God.

According to the Tanner, an absolute existed only in one sense - the totality of the Universe. Now this absolute has many characteristics that the religious apply to their deity. It is eternal, infinite, mysterious and since all contradictions are resolved within it, the universe is also the One and the Good. The interrelatedness of all suggests Reason and Karma. He stripped the god concept of its superstitious exterior and exposed the materialist (in the Dietzgenian sense) core of the belief.

Dietzgen was critical of the basic logic of everyday life - (also the logic of most so-called philosophers) which is Formal or Aristotelian logic. (also known as Patriarchal logic) This is a system in which things are ... or they are not. Contradiction is excluded. According to such thinking if a contradiction is present in a proposition, the proposition can only be faulty. - i.e., there can only be one answer. This reasoning is fine for crossing the street or adding up a bill, but in more complex situations difficulties arise. But how can something be and yet not be and therefore exist in contradiction? I am not the same person I was when I started to type this essay - cells in my body have died and been replaced... yet I am the same person. Dietzgen's logic, dialectical logic, sees reality as a process, like a movie, whereas Formal logic fixes the world as though in a snapshot. Formal logic limits us to either/or choices and ignores the web of interactions which constitute the universe. Formal logic is at the root of all the false choices which people forever want us to make - i.e., should we organize employed or unemployed workers? Should we do propaganda in the workplace or the community? Should we support social ecology or workers' movements? Etc. The view that always tries to reduce reality should be rejected and people should work wherever they are, realizing that all struggles are part of the one struggle.

This pamphlet has been a bare outline of Joseph Dietzgen's thinking. For those interested in studying his works, read, Nature of Human Brain Work (see below) and try to find a copy of his Philosophical Essays (university libraries) These works still need to be read; as history, since the Tanner was the precursor of many ideas popularized by later thinkers, as an introduction to Hegelian philosophy (he was a follower of Hegel) and, most relevant of all, to be adapted by the contemporary libertarian socialist current found among many Greens, feminists and anarchists. There is a great need to overcome the fragmentation, sectarianism and ideological thinking which pervades this tendency. The application of Dietzgen's libertarian dialectics would certainly aid this endeavor.

L. Gambone

Nature of Human Brain Work is available from Red Lion Press or the Vancouver IWW, Box 65635, Station F, Vancouver B.C. V5N5K5 for \$7.00

THE SURVIVAL OF THE WEAKEST: LOVE, SCIENCE AND SOCIAL CHANGE, by Ken R. Smith, 1994, 366 pages plus 14 pages of references and a nine-page name index. Paperback £14.95, \$20 postpaid for U.S. readers, from John Ball Press, Sheepcot, Folly Lane, May Hill, Gloucester, GL17 0NP England.

Smith's book is a sort of compendium of information gathered--I assume--over a good many years by an inveterate reader who also happens to be a non-market socialist. I gained a better idea of the book's value when a friend gave me a copy of Chomsky's five-page essay, "On Post Modernism, Theory, Fads, etc.," published on "ZNet: a mini-web from Z Magazine" as an answer to a questioner who demanded that he explain his hostility to postmodernism and contempt for the writings of postmodernists. Skimming through Smith's book, I found out what post modernism is when I happened to find a definition of it on page 207 in Chapter 9, "Art and Revolution." So that no DB reader need ever puzzle over the meaning of this nineties political term, I reproduce below Smith's--and one David Harvey's--explanation:

*Plus ça change.* In the disillusion that followed the events of 1968 - that well meant but ill-fated response to the failure of governments in meeting the aspirations of workers, students, women, minorities, - there was a similar relapse into irrationality. The codeword that eventually appeared to express the jumble of reactions was *postmodernism*. In that nobody could agree what modernism meant - the usage spread across several disciplines: architecture, art, literature, philosophy, politics, etc. - the confusion was more confounded than ever.

David Harvey, more lucid than many of the commentators, attempted to clear the ground:

Modernism was very much about the pursuit of better futures, even if perpetual frustration of the aim was conducive to paranoia. But postmodernism typically strips away that possibility by concentrating upon the schizophrenic circumstances induced by fragmentation and all those instabilities (including those of language) that prevent us even picturing coherently, let alone devising strategies to produce some radically different future.<sup>10</sup>

The bias - it will not bear the weight of harder definition - of postmodernity is toward pluralism, relativism; to reject any attempt to predict or plan for the future upon any other than an *ad hoc* basis. Of course, there is an echo of Karl Popper's attack on Marxist "historicism" in *The Open Society and its Enemies* and the rejection of "metanarratives" by Lyotard, Foucault and Co. in France. The anguish was not just about the failure of the events of 1968, but also the earlier horror of many Communist sympathisers at the true nature of the Russian regime as the news filtered through.

The conclusion they had reached was not that their beliefs were false and should be corrected, but that one should not have any generalised beliefs at all.

The chapter titles will give you an idea of the range of subjects: 1. Clearing the ground, 2. The world we live in, 3. How capitalism came about. From enclosure to foreclosure, 4. The contending parties, 5. Goodbye to the capitalist class, 6. What about the workers--What do they own? 7. Doom versus boom, 8. Alternative societies and movements, 9. Art and revolution, 10. The other half --Women and the revolution, 11. Post capitalist society--the how, 12. Post capitalist society--the why.



A major weakness of the book is the lack of a subject index--you won't find out what postmodernism is by looking it up. The index of proper names, though, leaves little to be desired--nearly 900 entries. Consider these: Saint Ambrose 1 reference, King Arthur 1, A.J. Ayer 7, Bakunin 4, Francis Bacon 4, Jean Beaudrillard 7, Daniel Bell 8, Bookchin 6, Bob Black 2, Castoriadis, Steve Coleman 3, J.K. Galbraith 6, Ronald Reagan 2, Anton Pannekoek 1, Upton Sinclair 1, B.F. Skinner 1, Joseph Stalin 8, Mother Theresa 2, Zinoviev 1, Zola 3.

The last two chapters are especially impressive. For one thing Smith tackles most of the hard questions we run into in our discussions with the unsaved: questions about the actual mechanism by which humans will gain control of their lives and about the nature of a non-market society in the light of what the great majority have come regard as the sinful, evil nature of our species. As to the former he rejects political reformism as utterly futile--and spells out the reasons with examples. To my sorrow, though, he accepts the role of experiments in cooperation both in production--as in Mondragon--and in communitarian living as useful to demonstrate the possibilities of alternative societies and to prepare people for the idea of a world of cooperation rather than competition. He examines several schemes for setting up such a society and concludes that attempts to intervene in the operation of the system at either the political or economic level are doomed because they will not end the primary villain -- the market, whose control over economic decisions dooms the planet to increased growth, increased pollution, and increased human misery in the form of poverty.

While Smith believes that the numerically negligible non-market, libertarian socialist groups and individuals possess the only rational solution to the problem of capitalism, he is highly critical of their [our] tactics, which he sees as sectarian and more concerned with defeating the infidels in verbal battle than in converting them.

According to Smith, we are presently in the transition period Marx spoke of in *The Gotha Program*. Capitalism itself is evolving as its internal problems multiply. Reform--*interventionism*, as he calls it--can show us only the limits of the system. Post-revolutionary society will be characterized by the antithesis of capitalism: social ownership of the means of production, free access to the necessities of life, voluntary work, and the absence of a coercive state. Why will it come about instead of one of the authoritarian nightmares waiting in history's wings? The answer is human nature: "It is this culturally directed, conditioned behavior [loving one another] which has welded human groups into organic wholes and seen us through the vicissitudes of evolution. Not the Survival of the Fittest but the survival of the Weakest. This is not only the distinguishing mark of civilization but is also the secret of our evolutionary success."

--Frank Girard

**We Only Want...the Earth!** is the latest addition to the list of non-market socialist journals. Number 1, November 1995 invites us to send in our "ideas on creating a new world of freedom, beauty, and abundance" in any of the following languages: English, German, French, Swedish, Afrikaans, Dutch, Spanish, Norwegian, Portuguese, or Danish. WOW-TE is a side benefit of Boeing's all-out effort to inflict austerity on its workers. Mark Manning, who edits, writes, and prints it is on strike--or was. I hear conflicting reports on the status of the strike. The *Grand Rapids Press* has less than complete labor coverage. (Mark has also been publishing his own personal weekly strike bulletin, *Schrontz's Nightmare*, which contains enough good material, both graphic and poetic, to fill an issue of the DB.) WOW-TE is also strong artistically with poetry by Shelley and some classical illustrations. This first issue reflects Mark's political positions and current interests with an article on the Boeing strike, and an introductory statement that defines his politics and asserts his view that we live in a class society, that reform has failed, that our goal should be free access, and that our tactic should be direct action. He also lists the people he sees as having "moved our struggle forward: Among them are Tom Paine, Tom Brown, Peter Kropotkin, T-Bone Slim, Karl Marx, Daniel De Leon, Steve Coleman, Samuel Leight, and Adam Buick. Published monthly (if possible); format: 1/2 standard, 22 pages, \$2 per issue, \$20 for ten issues from Mark Manning, 1709 South Holgate Street, Seattle, WA 98144.

**The Macedonian Question -- And the Recent War in Yugoslavia in Historical Perspective.** Global capitalism needs law and order. And so do the capitalists of each nation. But true to their instincts the capitalists of each nation compete for the best deal possible, and the law and order necessary for global capitalism takes a backseat to immediate needs. The former Yugoslavia illustrates this beautifully. *The Macedonian Question* by a TPTG, a Greek libertarian communist group, discusses the implications for Macedonia and the southern Balkans of the present struggle among the ruling classes of the Yugoslav successor states. Most of the pamphlet seeks the roots of the present crisis in terms of the history of the area and the needs of its ruling class. Written in 1993 it doesn't mention the recent peace efforts, but the authors see the conflict between the national and international needs of the rulers: "The bureaucrats [and capitalists - fg] on the one hand look forward to a supranational European capitalism, and on the other they need nationalism to regiment working class reactions to austerity measures." Sixteen standard pages stapled, \$1 or four IRCs from TPTG, PO Box 76149 Nea Smirni 17110, Athens, Greece or from Collective Action Notes, PO Box 22962, Baltimore, MD 21203.

**Communist Headache: Notes for Working and Living**, Volumes 1, 2, and 3. CH explains its purpose as follows: "*Our notes for working and living represent our efforts to develop a radical methodology for examining society, and our observations and recommendations when we apply this methodology to various aspects of the capitalist system.*

*We are only a small group, and have put out these first three volumes in a hope to engage in critical debate and to further the revolutionary cause. Communist Headache does not exist as some formal organization. If we manage to stir some revolutionaries from their various slumbers then we will consider this initial stage as successful. Needless to say we offer no blueprints and our analyses are far from flawless.*" These three volumes contain some rather heavy theoretical articles: "Some Questions for the Anarchist Movement," "Workplace Struggle vs Community Struggle," "Post Modernism vs Class Struggle," "Libraries and Journalists on Strike," and "Crime, Community, and Capitalism." Volume 3 has an interesting six-page critique of LETS (Local Exchange Trading Schemes), the effort by



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anti-capitalists to carry on their lives outside capitalism's economic system, moneyless exchange, etc. with the improbable title, "How the Other Half Lives, How the Other Half Suffers, How the Other Half Struggles..." CH has not put a price on the three volumes (28, 25, and 29 stapled eurostandard pages respectively), but we can contact them at C.H., c/o Black Star, P.O. Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY England.

**The Industrial Worker: the Voice of Revolutionary Unionism** is the monthly newspaper of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World). Like *The People*, reviewed below, it has been around a while. It began volume 93 with the January issue. Besides major articles on the fishing industry ("Bosses Kill Fishing Industry" by Arthur J. Miller) and the Boeing strike ("Boeing Workers: 'It's Our Turn Now'" by Mark Manning), this issue has Mike Ballard's review of two books on the Spanish Revolution, one by Murray Bookchin, and numerous shorter articles on both U.S. and foreign labor struggles. 12 tabloid pages, \$1 per copy, \$15 per year from Industrial Worker, 103 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti, MI 48197.

**The People** is the 22 times yearly newspaper of the Socialist Labor Party. Like the *Industrial Worker* it has seniority. In fact, at age 104 it is certainly the oldest English language socialist paper in existence, and unless I am mistaken, the oldest continuously published socialist paper in any language. Also, like the IW it is a "voice of revolutionary unionism," and like the IW advocates the socialist industrial unionism of the original IWW as it has done since 1905. Its tone is a bit more ponderous than that of the IW, probably because of its historic burden as the voice of the SLP. But its ideas and critique of capitalism and capitalist unionism are identical, if a bit more explicit. The current issue, December 23, has a lead article by Nathan Karp, former national secretary of the SLP, "Year Ending on Economic Sour Note for U.S. Workers," chronicling the decline in the condition of U.S. workers. Like the IW, it has articles on the Boeing strike, the French strike movement against government cutbacks, and other labor coverage. Eight tabloid pages, \$1 for a four-month trial sub; \$4 per year (22 issues) from 111 W. Evelyn, #209, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.